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ABSTRACT

Instructions for a variety of activities relating to Mexican culture are provided, with brief descriptive and historical notes on Mexican heritage. Arts and crafts from western, central, and southern Mexico are represented as well as many which are common to all of Mexico. Some of the activities included are weaving, chewing gum sculpture, paper flowers, pottery making, masks, tin art, sugar art, sewing, and cooking. Some additional areas covered are: (1) miniatures and other toys; (2) processes involved when making or using items such as clay pottery, baker's clay, bread sculpture, papier mache, rice, and embroidery; (3) puppets, masks, murals, and culture maps; (4) short cuts and substitutes in preparing materials and projects; (5) items needed for classroom cooking; (6) U.S. equivalents for Mexican cooking implements; (7) a glossary of required food items; and (8) recipes. "There" is used in the text to indicate methods and materials used in Mexico, and "here" for comparative activities for the U.S. classroom. Suggested resources and a 36-item bibliography are included. (JW)

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Mexican Heritage through Arts and Crafts

ART OF THE FOLK

for Boys and Girls

by Barbara Linse

RC014117

ART OF THE FOLK

by Barbara Linse

Dedicated to Aileen Chapman and Wilson Riles, my close and special friends in education, who helped me sustain the goal of giving children of different cultures the chance to learn and grow from one another.

Illustrations by Cynthia Clark
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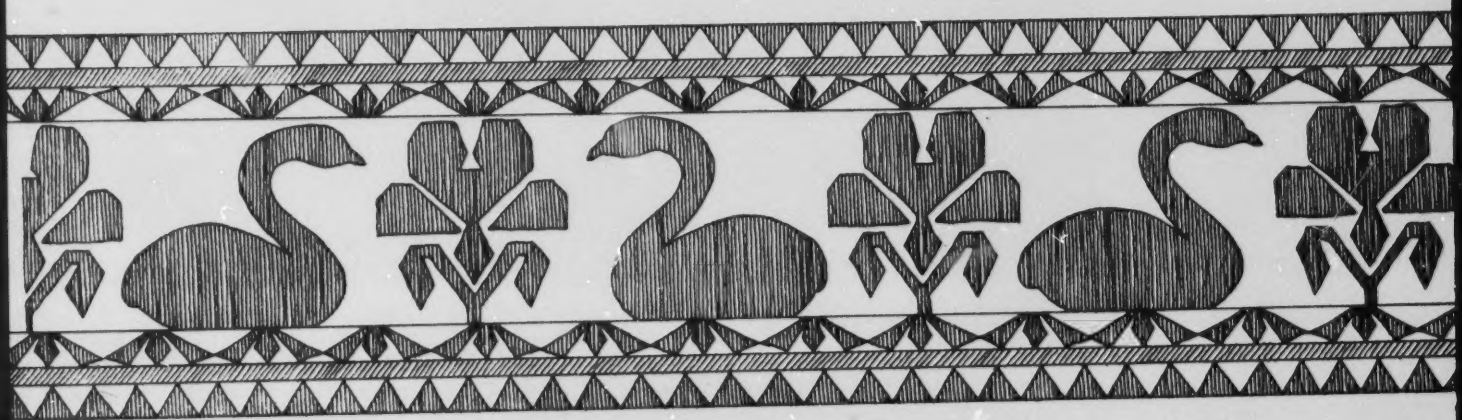

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In the Beginning

Start on this grand adventure with your children through working together on the artifacts, making and playing with the toys and miniatures, preparing foods, dramatizing festivals or market days, and, as time goes on, summing up your children's conceptual learning through dramatization, mural and map making.

Conceptual: To develop students' abilities to state main ideas, e.g., the Mexican people on the whole take pride in the Art of the Folk, for its part in the Mexican Historical Drama; Mexican arts and crafts are a real reflection of Mexico, past and present, with lovely spontaneity and a real wholesome valuing of beauty.

Inquiry: To improve students' abilities to interpret, classify, analyze and use other inquiry processes in the study of another culture. To develop skills in using maps and other media in the study of another culture.

Affective: To develop a recognition and acceptance of the richness of the diverse Mexican culture as expressed in folk art.

Be off to a flying start; arrange displays that include news articles, pictures, and other objects placed around a large map of Mexico on bulletin boards and tables.

Show films, play music, flip a *tortilla* and eat a *chile* seed.

Use questions during discussion to bring out background. What have you heard, read or seen in your home or in the homes of others about Mexican popular arts and crafts, including cooking? In having children do simulated pieces of folk art, they are, as the Mexicans in Mexico, learning to innovate and improvise with the materials at hand.

Mexico is a country rich in folk art which reflects the past and the present.

The Cities in Mexico are beginning to have a different flavor; that of mechanization, industrialization and depersonalization. Factories are becoming the national toy makers. Families are streaming to the cities for factory work with a real folk cultural loss. It hasn't happened yet, but it appears to be on the way.

Typically, the Mexican family and larger family, the community, as a group is cohesive. As individuals, each is supportive rather than competitive (as it is found in the United States). They look to adults for their role models rather than to their peers, as do many children in the United States.

Bi-cultural education in the United States offers the almost impossible dream of giving children the chance to value, learn, and some day to function, using the "best" values from both cultures with more social, emotional, intellectual richness and flexibility.

Note: **"THERE"** is used to indicate methods and materials used in Mexico, and **"HERE"** for comparative activities in the classroom.

Western Mexico

The Huichol Indians of Nayarii and Northern Jalisco

Art of the Huicholes: Many of the designs they use come from their imaginings. They close their eyes and describe what they see in yarns, beads, and so on. Huichol people used to be inhospitable and isolated.

Now air strips, roads, etc., have changed all of that.

Huicholes live in the Sierras, north and around Tepec and Guadalajara.

It is difficult to "pin down" Huichol designs: *A mosaic of colored yarn* could do. Much is shaped like the cacti, native to their region, or the peyote cactus; others like little people loving the sun.

The first designs for bags taught to children are the eight-pointed star and the four-petaled *Toto* flowers from the peyote cactus, which inspire many geometric patterns for their embroidery work.

Cross stitch used on embroidery on men's clothing; orange, green, yellow, and magenta are probably colors in their world.

Men may carry as many as one half dozen bags around their waists; embroidered with yarn, charmingly primitive, with a real sense of rhythm through repetition.

You'll also see yarn gussying up little fat gourds; bird feathers adorning hats; cross stitch embroidery on men's huge handkerchiefs and women's skirts.

Common designs are imaginings from the *Toto* flower, deer, birds and other growing things.

Pinturas con Estambre - Yarn Painting

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Yarns from sheep's wool in bright colors.

Sources for designs: The stars, the sun, animals and flowers that are found close by.

Sun-softened beeswax (made in the hive) called *Cera de Campeche;* a gourd or a piece of wood for the background, etc., and

a warm day for spreading the wax.

Draw the picture or design in wax; press the yarn firmly, starting in the center and working outward.

Fill in every spot for a work of art to *please the universe.*

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Ideas for the painting's subject *taken especially from nature.*

Backgrounds: Wood, masonite or cardboard; white glue or liquid starch; bright colored yarns; and scissors.

Draw the design on the background.

Start at the center and glue or starch the yarn down, using preplanned shapes and colors.

If starch is used, dip in the yarn, squeeze out the starch and press down the yarn.

When using glue, put it on first, then lay down the yarn a strand at a time until it's a finished yarn painting.

Let dry 24 hours.

Ojos de Dios - God's Eyes

◦THERE◦

Material:

2 12" sticks or reeds;

wool yarn in 3 or 4 bright colors.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

2 (4, 6, 8, etc.) sticks, chopsticks, popsicle sticks, twigs, tongue depressors;

bright colored yarn; and

glue to secure center of eye.

Put two sticks together to make a cross.

The sticks can be the same or different lengths.

Wrap yarn tightly around the **"Center of the Eye"** to hold it firmly.

Next, wind or weave the yarn over and under each stick until the center is about 1¼"

Change colors by breaking the first color and twisting the second tightly with it for 3/4".

You can make a square knot *for tidiness.*

You may change and add colors as you wish; add a stick and make a new eye.

You might have 5 on a stick, using 2 to 5 related and repeated yarn colors.

THIS OJO IS THE EYE OR CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE, WATCHING YOU AND BEING WATCHED BY YOU.

WHITE
GLUE

Bolsas de Lana Tradicionales- Traditional Embroidered Bags

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Coarsely woven wool cloth, cut into a rectangular shape;

wool yarn in many colors;

large-eyed needles.

Plan a design with either geometric shapes or those from nature.

Decorate with cross stitch embroidery.

Sew closed at the sides, using a simple over and under stitch or the button-hole stitch (see Embroidery).

These purses are used principally by and for the men, for carrying food and other necessities for a long trip.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Burlap or other coarse fabric, cut into a rectangular shape;

yarn;

large-eyed needles;

graph paper; and

crayons.

Pre-plan design on graph paper; sketch lightly on cloth rectangle.

Embroider in cross stitch and use a blanket stitch to close it along the sides (see Embroidery); or make bright colored design in crayons.

Cinturones Tejados- Woven Belts

These traditionally go over a man's shoulder or around his waist to hold his coarse bag.

These are now made for tourists and are most generally wider than their older "cousins."

◦THERE◦

Materials:

A Backstrap Loom;

a tree; and

some bright colored wood yarn.

Weave a 1" to 2" width belt using a geometric pattern most often.

Make the belts long enough to go around the waist or over the shoulder as needed.

Cinturones are made for holding one or more *"Bolsas de Lana."*

◦HERE◦

Materials:

A Soda Straw Loom;

yarn; and

safety pins or bobby pins (as shuttles for carrying yarn back and forth).

Weave a belt (with a geometric motif, if skill permits).

Weave the belt so that it is long enough to be useful (see Weaving).

The belts are made to hold one yarn bag over the shoulder or several around the waist.

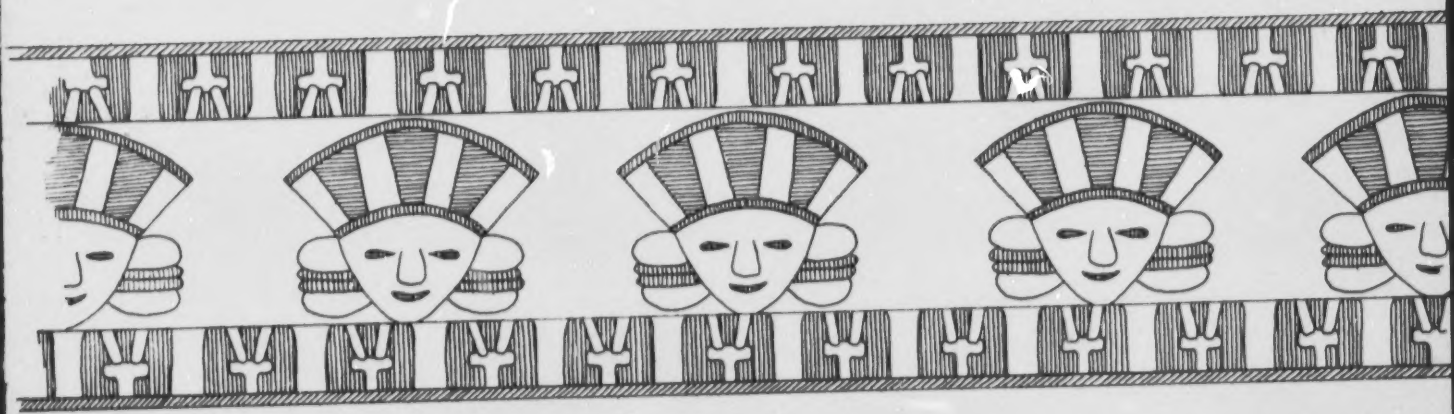
State of Guerrero

Guerrero is a great center for many kinds of popular arts, and, indeed, what could be more "popular" than silver?

In the 16th Century, mines around Taxco were fairly spitting forth silver, and the artisans were there to make it into beautiful utilitarian works of art.

The style has reached a time of spanning the years, with contemporary designs mingled with the ancient ones which have stood the test of time.

The lovely lacquer of the state is not only beautiful to see, and aromatic as well.



Papel Amate Pintado - Painted Bark Paper

∘THERE∘

Materials:

Amate paper from a wild fig tree (the paper is made in the state of Puebla):

water soluble paint;

1 - 3 paint brushes of varying bristle widths.

A love of *Nature's Treasures* — birds and fish, blossoms and leaves, to mention a few.

The ability to paint them in a delightful, stylized manner, using very bright colors of magenta, orange, turquoise, red, and green.

Perhaps, when each color is in its own little home you have a *"Bright Barrio!"*

Plan the design to fit the size and shape of your paper.

Paint one color at a time, allowing each color to dry before painting the next.

The designs on the *Amate* are almost identical to that of much pottery from this region.

The pottery colors are much softer *mas suave.*

∘HERE∘

Materials:

Brown wrapping paper bags (crumpled, soaked and cut to the desired size and shape);

sugar;

canned milk;

Please don't eat the painting!

Colored chalk or tempera or poster paint;

egg cartons for holding dry tempera or colored chalk pieces each in its own color home, *like teeny ghettos!;*

water color brushes.

You can work on the paper when it is wet or dry, but do have it "pruned."

Use motifs from nature, such as *pudgy birds,* cactus-like leaves, and *scallopy blossoms.*

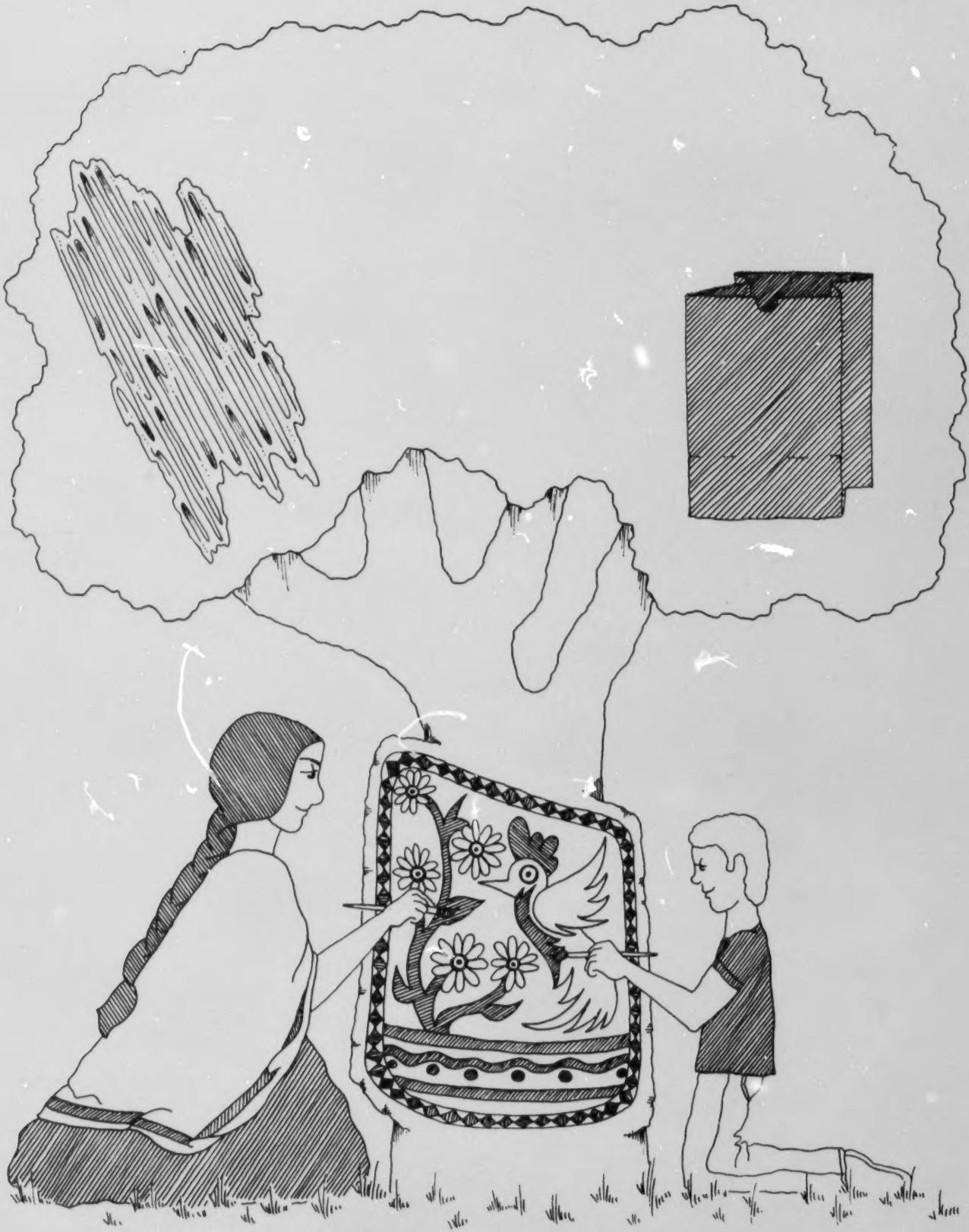
Pre-sketch your design (you don't have to hide all of the paper below).

Bring it to life with bright colors.

Add brightness by mixing 1 tsp. of sugar for each ½ cup liquid and 1 tbsp. powdered milk for permanence; or

Dip colored chalk pieces into the sweet milky water and use them wet.

Much pottery from this area is decorated with very similar shapes, but in softer colors.



Objetos Hechos de Plata - Beautiful Things from Silver

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Silver mines near Taxco (yep! There are mines and miners there.);

factories for readying silver to be made beautiful;

factories and "workshops" where artisans with years of training and experience are making silver serving pieces, silver eating pieces of "flatware" such as knives, forks, spoons, etc., and silver jewelry of every imaginable style, shape and size.

Finished pieces that are solid silver are called "sterling" which means "of top quality" and must say "sterling."

Silver-plated pieces are made of another basic substance and have had a "silver bath."

Much of the silver is melted and poured into molds or "cast", while some pieces are forged and assembled by hand and inspiration.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Silver colored everything — aluminum, foil, disposable pans, TV dinner trays (from Mexican dinners, of course!), wire, silver metallic wrapping paper;

plaster, Alfiñique or *Migajón*

bonding glue;

paint;

sturdy scissors;

grease or vaseline;

aluminum or steel wire;

tin snips;

spoons;

paper clips;

"greasy spoon" jewels with holes punched for hanging and dangling paper clips.

Greasy Spoon Jewels:

Find a spoon, a teeny bowl, or any little concave mold;

grease the mold and fill with *plaster* or use *Alfiñique* or *Migajón.*

Remove when firm and paint a glittery grey or silver.

Use foil pans shaped and embellished with bonded-on foil (shiny side up);

fashion tableware and cut jewels from foil; make a necklace from elegantly twisted curves or curlicues of wire; add a "greasy spoon jewel" or ones from "finger formed paper clips."

Objetos de Laca - Art Pieces from Lacquer

◦THERE◦

Materials:

A box, or gourd that has been cut in the middle for 2 bowls; or a gourd that has been cut in a zigzag fashion at the top for a star shape pattern (dry it and keep and use the gourd and lid); or large gourds from which *bandejas* or trays are cut;

paint pigments of 2 contrasting colors;

commercial brushes or brushes made from a deer's tail;

500 *chia* seeds;

sharp stones for etching;

brown earth;

white mineral and white stone from the earth.

Toast and pound the *chia* seeds; squeeze them, extracting their oil, and store; boil in water, after water evaporates it will leave a thick wax.

Keep it usable by adding a few drops of water daily.

Cover the piece with the *chia* wax. Mix red paint pigment, brown earth and white powder to make the red lacquer.

The red lacquer is then applied to the piece with a deer's tail. When this is dry and hard, a contrasting paint color is used to cover the piece, and allowed to dry.

Finally, when the piece has 2 coats, inside and out, the pattern is etched through; generally a combination of geometric and natural shapes is used.

When etching is complete, the red glistens through and the work is brushed with a paint brush of a deer's tail, using a final coat of *chia* oil.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Boxes;

cut, opened, and dried gourds;

wood for an any-size tray;

waxed crayons or India ink;

Instruments for etching, such as a fork, sharp stone, or spoon, etc.; Breakfast Salad.

Cover surface with a strong, full application of crayon, covering every inch (e.g. red).

Cover again with a strongly contrasting color crayon (e.g. black), making sure that none of the bottom coat shows through. (The top coat also can be of India ink.)

Let dry.

As soon as the piece is covered with these two coats, inside and out, the etching can begin.

Use the stone, knife, or spoon, etc. as *etching* tools, creating a design that is a combination of flowers and birds and geometric pre-conquest shapes.

When the etching is complete, the base color glistens through and the work is brushed with Breakfast Salad.

State of Jalisco

The state of Jalisco is most famous in the realm of popular arts for its ceramic work.

While ceramic pieces are made all over Mexico, Jalisco probably rates as Number One.

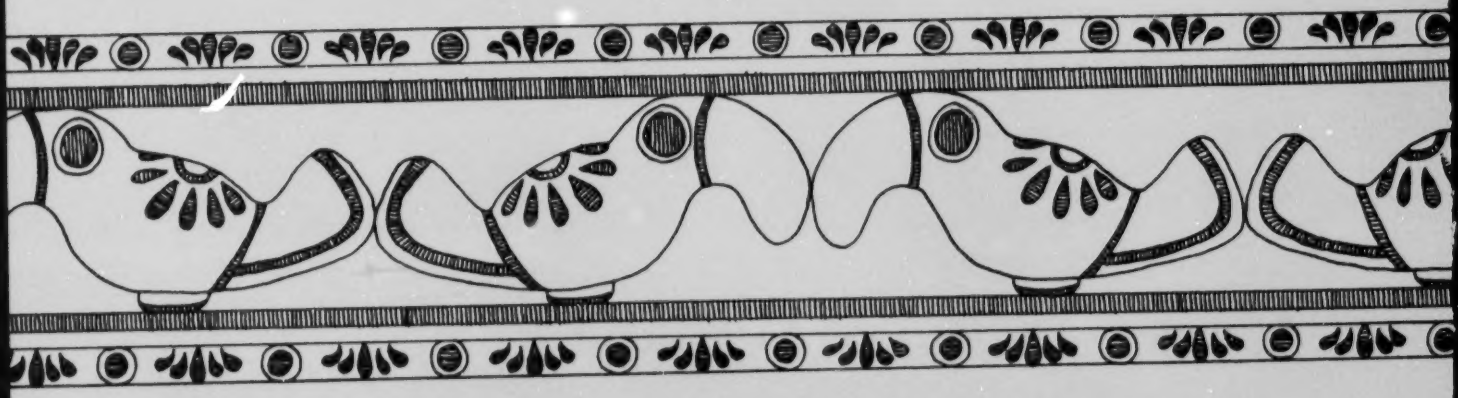
There are many pottery *pueblos* near Guadalajara; probably Tonola and Tlaquepaque are the most famous.

From these factories pottery pieces seem to flow as rapidly and bountifully as *tortillas* from a *tortilla* factory.

One style or type will be described here, but encourage an Jalisco *"pot party"* in your craft center, by asking to borrow pieces of ceramics looking at films and books, and bringing in resource persons to help.

Pottery is such a part of daily life through decoration, tableware, and so on, that its inclusion will add to the richness of understanding and appreciation by your youngsters.

Some *Huicholes* live in the mountains of Jalisco; thus, their arts and crafts are indigenous to this state also.



Objetos de Cerámica - Modeled Pieces from Tonolá

∘THERE∘

Materials:

Clay from the region;

kaolin (enough to put one coat on the finished piece);

black varnish;

glazes in tones of rust, grey-blue, black, yellow and some soft reds;

a kiln for firing pieces in *weird and wonderful shapes* (birds, fish, and all types of animal shapes);

inspiration for making *all sorts of things.*

Hand modeled clay pieces can be fat or thin ducks or turtles with wobbly heads, brave bulls, dishes, cowardly lions, tiles, owls, and so on.

All are beautifully decorated with stylized flowers, leaves, deer, etc., in subtle earth brown and grey glaze tones applied by hand.

Apply kaolin; then add a little antiquing with a dark varnish; apply more kaolin; and a final rub down for a *"slick chick."*

These pieces are kiln fired.

∘HERE∘

Materials:

Clay or Baker's Clay; or *Migajón;*

paper plates or other bases for decorating;

milky tempera paint;

colored chalk;

wax crayons;

paint brushes;

kiln for clay firing;

No More Shine or Homemade Gesso;

Breakfast Salad.

Sketch the general outline of design, including the decorations.

Model the piece and dry.

When your piece is ready, go over it with No More Shine or Homemade Gesso.

Let dry and sketch the design on the ducks, platypi, owls, tiles, etc.

Paint with tempera-mixed canned or powdered milk, or draw on designs with colored chalk dipped into canned milk. Wax crayons may be used also.

Antique with strong instant coffee.

If crayoned, polish the surface, if not, give it the Breakfast Salad treatment.

Escultura de Chicle - Jalisco - Chewing Gum Sculptures

(The Dentist's Delight!)

∘THERE∘

Materials:

Chicle, obtained as a gum from the sapodilla tree.

This chicle is the base for chewing gum.

The chicle is tinted, warmed and molded with hands.

It is elastic enough to be rolled into fine strands; braided and formed into little fruits or baskets of fruits, dolls and tiny bird cages.

The objects are constructed from a building up or out of coils.

Chicle can be made into tiny replicas of the Virgin Mary.

These pieces resemble porcelain when dry and are very fragile.

HERE

Materials:

Slightly chewed chewing gum, tinted with food coloring (sugarless, preferred);

a piece of oiled wax paper; and Vaselined fingers.

Discuss with the children the various possibilities here.

You may want to suggest the kind of pieces made in Mexico or let them have their own *gum-sculpting ideas;*

It is important to think *small and neat.*

Don't let undried pieces fall and remain on the floor or the custodian may never finish cleaning your room! *Ever!!*

Flores de Papel- Paper Flowers

THERE

Materials:

Tissue paper or crepe paper in bright colors;

florist wire or plain wire;

green crepe;

green tape;

scissors; and

glue.

HERE

Materials:

Tissue paper or crepe paper in bright colors;

florist wire or plain wire;

pipe cleaners;

masking tape;

green crepe;

green or greened tape;

scissors; and

glue.

Look at live flowers, pictures of flowers, and so forth.

From crepe paper cut a pretty flower colored crepe strip or tissue paper strip at least 3" wide, and long enough to make 5 to 20 petals for your flowers.

Check the petal's shape: fringed, scalloped, or gently curved, etc.

Cut the strips; fold at the petal's end (so you might have from 5 to 20 folds or petals).

Make the right finish: fringed, scalloped, gently curved, wiggly, wobbly, etc.; or make single petal flowers which are generally cut from colored tissue.

The size and shape will vary within one blossom.

For the center make a stamen.

Make a long narrow strip of tissue or crepe paper; cut one edge, usually by fringing (it can be folded to reduce cutting time); wrap other edge around wire; fluffing the fringe as you go.

Using florist tape, painted masking tape, or glue for holding center to the wire, wrap on the blossoms or single petals.

If you don't have florist wire, glue green crepe paper on a wire or pipe cleaner.

Make leaves from crepe paper, if possible, as it is sturdier.

In Mexico, the *"Flower People"* are certainly creating well beyond these basic flower types, from little or big, fat or thin, to narrow or fluffy.

So, with your boys and girls, you can move right along with experience into a *Flower Fairyland.*

Central Mexico
State of Michoacán

Michoacán, with its tall Tarascan Indians is known for its lovely handicrafts.

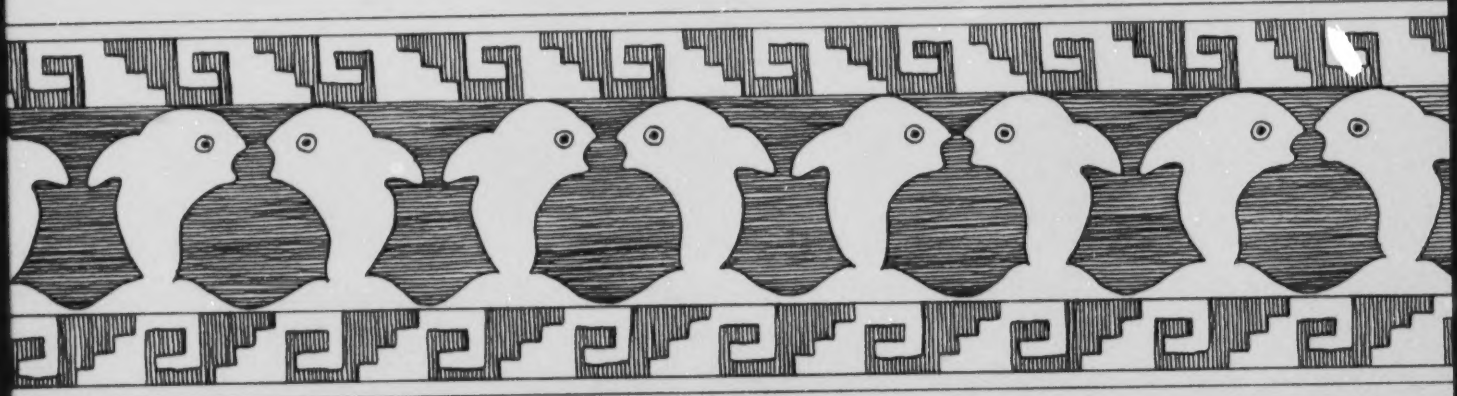
There is much natural beauty in the area, among which is beautiful Lake Pátzcuaro with its *"own special island,"* Janitzio, and its own special boats with butterfly nets.

Pátzcuaro white fish are almost a staple in the diet, and who knows but what this fat free source of protein accounts, in part, for the taller, leaner Mexicans who live here?

Spanish funds were given to the state for continued craft production, especially with their pre-conquest copper craft work and their lovely lacquer.

There are 11 pottery villages in the state of Michoacán.

Traditional pottery from Tzintzuntzán is made in a mold, the most unusual is a clay pineapple with real, rounded spikes.



Cerámica de Potombám - Pottery from Potombám

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Clay;

kiln (above ground);

glazes in browns, greens and blues;

feathers, stems, brushes, etc., for glaze painting.

Model serving pieces with a pie crust edge or plain edge.

Bisque fire.

Paint the glaze in a pattern, i.e., a green on green line painting of a flower; a green or brown Jesus carrying the cross to Golgotha; a brown plate with a brightly colored Mexican family, a dog and a cactus.

The piece may also be painted solidly with 2 colors and the pattern scraped or etched through.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Paper plates; especially mache plates or plates made from *Migajón,* Baker's Clay or clay;

Homemade Gesso;

crayons;

No More Shine;

Milky Tempera;

paint or crayon colors of browns, greens, and blues;

tools for etching, such as knives, forks or spoons.

Your youngsters can make their own miniatures or regular size dishes with plain or fluted edges.

Use No More Shine if surface is shiny.

Prepare the piece with Homemade Gesso.

Cover the piece with crayon and then crayon again.

Scratch through to the base color, making a flower, etc.; or

paint a Mexican family scene using Milky Tempera.

Cerámico del Lago de Pátzcuaro - Pottery from Lake Pátzcuaro

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Clay from the region;

experienced potter's hands;

black and white glazes;

brushes for painting;

kiln.

Fashion the piece (plates, pitchers, bowls, etc.);

bisque fire;

paint a simple, almost primitive design, as suggested by fish, fishing, recently acquired Christian symbols, animals, etc., using simple line drawings in black over a white glaze.

The edges have a crisscross repeated pattern in straight or curved lines.

Bake in kiln.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Clay, Baker's Clay or *Migajón;* or paper plates or other paper eating pieces (cups, bowls, etc.);

paints;

brushes;

Homemade Gesso;

Breakfast Salad.

Model the piece or use the paper plates, cups, etc.

Cover with Homemade Gesso.

Paint the base an off-white.

Dry.

Paint the design as described in the **THERE** section in colors of black or dark brown.

Dry.

Complete with Breakfast Salad.

Laca de Michoacán - Lacquer from Michoacán

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Big gourds, cut, cleaned out, and sun-dried to become trays or handy little holders; or

boxes; or

large, round wood trays to be adorned.

1000 *chia* seeds, toasted or roasted, crushed with a mortar and pestle;

the oil will be extracted and a bit of water will be added to it;

brown earth and the "magical white" powder;

red pigment;

a deer's tail or paint brushes bought from a store;

a porous stone.

Rub the unadorned piece with a coat of *chia* oil;

allow to dry for 3 days in the sun.

Rub surface with the porous stone;

wait for 3 days then apply the base coat of red lacquer ("magical white" powder; red pigment and brown earth) with the deer's tail or paint brush.

Plan the adornment pattern.

Mix the next color pigments separately and add the white *"mystery potion."*

Paint the piece, using flowers and leaves in a variety of colors.

Within the decorative border are found geometric shapes much like those used in pre-Columbian artifacts mingled with ones from nature, such as leaves, blossoms, birds and bees, etc.

Over the dry lacquered piece, brush *chia* oil.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Bases for lacquer pieces, such as paper plates, boxes, dried gourds, wooden trays, etc.;

paper for planning designs;

crayons for practice in color;

Homemade Gesso;

tempera or poster paint;

canned or powdered milk;

Breakfast Salad.

Mix your Homemade Gesso and apply to the surface of the awaiting art piece (plate, gourd, etc.).

Let dry.

Next, paint the base coat red, as used so frequently in Mexico.

Plan the designs and paint them on (flowers and leaves, etc.) with bright warm colors.

For permanence use Milky Tempera.

For shine, finish with Breakfast Salad.

Objetos de Trigo- Art Pieces from Wheat Rushes and Reeds

•THERE•

Materials:

A bundle of wheat;

twine;

scissors;

corrugated cardboard.

Decide which piece you want to make — a *corazón de trigo*, Maria and a halo, an angel, or a wreath with a bell, etc.

A flat, fanned-out piece with shiny wheat is made by cutting the stalks the length they are to be, from the outer edge to the center.

They can be firmly sewn to a cardboard backing (that doesn't show through).

Glue helps.

This is further strengthened and beautified by soaking split wheat stalks so they can be woven or intertwined through the fanned-out wheat.

Outstanding pieces are made over a bunch of wheat for a full figure.

The wheat is soaked long enough to be flattened for weaving.

Twine, glue and *"wheat thread"* are used as needed for securing the piece.

Don't be limited by pieces listed above — a good Mexican artisan will use his imagination with his skills.

A *petate* or a fan may be made by using the same process.

Reeds from dried palms may be used plain or dyed in bright colors.

Weave the reeds diagonally, either in short, wide strips or as a total unit.

Stitch together and use the three strand broader stitch for a clean finish.

Analine dyes are effective in giving your tan strips that frivolous look (yellow, magenta, red, green and turquoise), especially when all these colors are used together in a piece.

A stick fan handle can be covered with woven reeds on both sides.

In parts of Michoacan, the men wear soft, thick, fluffy raincoats made from long thick fibers.

They go from the shoulder to the ground.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Wheat or other pieces of reed that can be flexibly handled;

string;

scissors;

Manila paper or colored construction paper;

corrugated cardboard;

glue;

ruler;

food coloring.

Boys and girls with a little strip weaving experience can come a long way in gaining fiber weaving skills by starting with paper.

Cut a 12" x 18" piece of Manila paper or colored construction paper (or newspaper for economy);

draw a line across the top, about 1" from the paper's edge.

Measure equi-distant sections at right angles to first line.

Draw lines with a ruler;
cut to the stop line.

Cut from various colored paper, strips the width of the Manila strips.

Weave the loose strips in and out, creating a multicolored pattern.

Staple, glue or decorate the edges.

Soak reeds or wheat for weaving: make a fan, a miniature rug or a place mat.

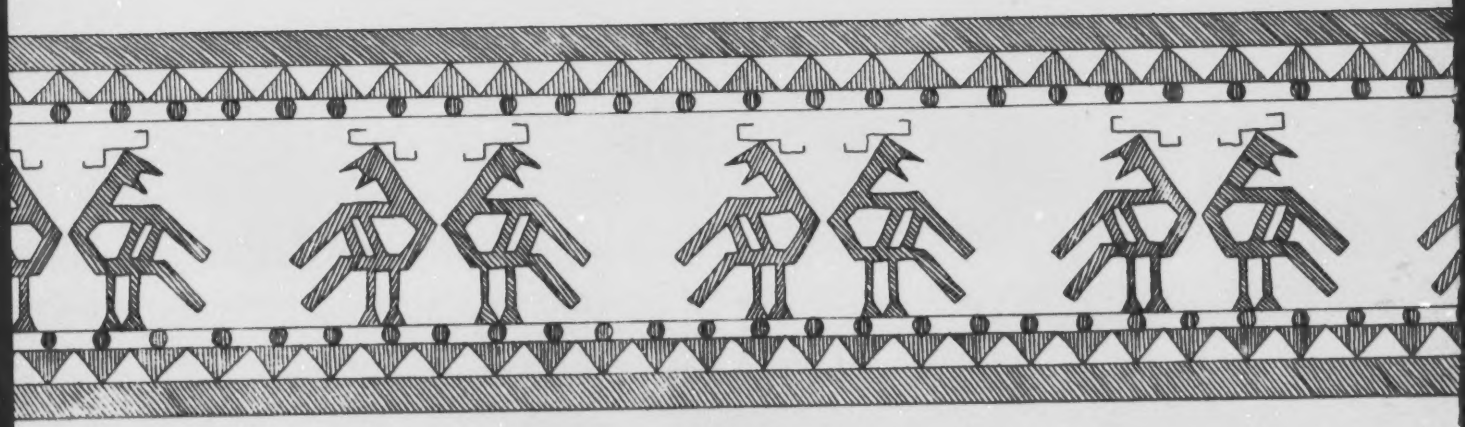
Dip parts of your reeds in food coloring.

Look for more ideas in the **THERE** section.

State of Guanajuato

Guanajuato is a state of early colonization, tall mountains and much culture mix, or a true new culture.

Because of its colonial past, and the fact that the struggle for independence was even planned there, much of their popular art is creole or mestizo (mixed Spanish and Indian) in design.



Máscaras de Papel Cartón - Masks of Papier Mâché

The art of mask making goes back in time at least 1000 years.

Animals, symbols of nature — gods, sun, and moon, etc., were used with faith and tenacity.

Christian symbols, Mary and devils are now around.

Other masks include skeletons, donkeys, little old men, just plain folk, and range in size from great big 6' masks to teeny, teeny masks.

Mexican masks are also made from *wood, tin, hemp, and paper, as well as Papier Mâché.*

THERE

Materials:
Paper (cement bags are nice and firm but others, such as brown bags, are also in demand);

flour and water (trigo) mixed into a paste;

un cuchillo (knife);

a plaster mold;

a form of the face's shape and the mold were cast in plaster over the "prototype."

Animal fat or *ceba* (car oil) or vaseline;

blanco de espano (gesso);

paint from pigment and fish mucilage.

Animal fat or *ceba* is brushed all over the surface of the mold.

Fold the paper and make a paste sandwich;

tear the sandwich into 4" x 4" squares.

Glue two layers on the mold, pressing and shoving for completeness.

Lift mask from mold or make a clean cut to pull mask apart.

This will be re-glued with a strip of mâché.

Cover with *Blanco de España* and let dry.

Paint each section, with drying time in between.

HERE

Materials:

A head full of mask motifs from this culture.

See Papier Mâché Masks.

Also, use decorating ideas from the **THERE** section.

Objetos de Hojalata - Tin Art

Tin is mined, forged, and given an artistic face lift all over Mexico.

There are artisans at work in many pueblos and cities, forging tin into all sorts of exotic looking art and utilitarian pieces.

Some pieces are embellished with brass, copper or paint.

Tin and copper are the primary ingredients for making brass.

Guanajuato is selected here for the great varieties and quantities of tin pieces produced.

Copper mines are plentiful (as of this writing), but the ore is being mined out at a rapid rate.

These metal arts are of rather recent origin, as gold and silver were mined and used abundantly in early cultures (including Hispanic) by the wealthy and as a means of accumulating wealth.

Oval masks are of many sizes and variations on the basic theme but have tin fringed hair and eyelashes, marbly eyes glued in place, and build-up lips. Noses often have *a little brass.*

∘THERE∘

Materials:

a big tin mine;

wealthy patrons;

a smelter for melting down the tin, combining it with copper for making brass.

Tin and brass sheets are formed in factories and sent to the artisans where they are fashioned into works of popular art.

Tin sheets and galvanized wire;

awls, one blunt tip and one pointed;

a ball peen hammer;

round nose pliers;

a pattern to sketch the piece to be made;

soldering tools;

work surface;

heavy rubber pad;

muriatic acid (used in soldering) for fusing together;

a vise

anvil;

sand;

polishing tools;

lacquer;

brush applicator;

an anti-corrosive underpaint;

enamels of many colors (semi-gloss);

brushes;

dark varnish (the old antiqued look!);

a thin mixture of tar and gasoline;

wires to be soldered on for ornament hanging.

The tin is cut to be shaped and soldered (if needed) into the piece you want.

For raised pattern, hammer on reverse side.

The Mexican tinsmith combines materials, experience and ingenuity in creating many one-of-a-kind pieces.

Tin masks; these can be large (about 2" x 4" or 8" x 12") or even enormous.

Lamps and lanterns are many-faced and sized;

tin plates with round balls hammered into the flattened edge — these are made in all sizes, but are generally round;

big and little chickens and hens, mirrors, and picture frames that are flattened or fluted;

drummer boys, every fruit and vegetable

around, Christmas trees, Easter eggs, Baby Jesus, flowers, and take your pick of animals.

These and many other pieces are dressed up in enamel.

◇HERE◇

Materials:

Tin and aluminum cans (all sorts of sizes);

can openers;

aluminum foil;

all sorts of aluminum sheets; food trays (TV dinners, pot pies, broiler pans, teeny little pie pans for teeny little masks);

off-set litho plates from printer;

No More Shine;

paper clips;

freezer;

hammer;

nails;

old towels;

Milky Tempera;

Homemade Gesso;

Breakfast Salad;

aluminum wire (for hanging);

old, but sturdy, scissors.

Masks: Cut from foil broiler pan, TV dinner trays or those great rectangular pot pie pans;

it's *"I'm finished with dinner and looking into a Mexican Mask"* time.

These pieces are easy to sculpt: fringed stand-uphair and eye lashes, marbly eyes, "way-out" ears, and so forth.

Other large pieces can be cut and sculpted similarly, but by pleating and bending for mirrors and frames.

Lanterns (for a "candle light") are made by taking a lid from a can, filling the can with water, freezing it, then placing it on a towel, and hammering nail holes all over the can.

A bevy of beautiful ornaments can be fashioned from tin can lids, cut in various shapes, and off-set litho plates with paper clip hangers.

You have just scratched the surface with tin, you can *delve even deeper.*

Cover the pieces to be painted with No More Shine.

Paint with Milky Tempera.

Finish with Breakfast Salad.

These can also be bases for Mache.

Alfiñique - Sugar Art

While these *sweet skills* and other pretties are made all over Mexico, Guanajuato is probably the "Alfiñique Capital" of Mexico.

This art form was used originally only for celebrations of the Day of the Dead, with sweet skulls and skeletons, decorated in pretty line designs and pastel colors of icing and with your name or that of a friend embossed on it someplace.

Now it is used throughout the year because it is also very charming an art form. Lambs, rams, fruits, eggs and most any rather small piece that can be easily modeled or put in a mold can be made.

~THERE~

Materials:

Granulated sugar;

water;

powdered sugar;

containers for mixing;

molds or capable hands for pressing the stiff sugar paste in place;

shiny paper;

glitter; and

other suitable materials for dressing these "sweet things";

a paper cone for icing the piece.

Mix granulated sugar and water into a very stiff grainy paste.

Put in a mold or model with your hands.

When pieces are dry, decorate with a powdered sugar water substance that is an icing, to which pastel coloring has been added.

The icing is applied in narrow lines in the shape of dainty flowers, your name, etc., or fat splashes of color to decorate a larger part of the sweet thing.

The most frequently used frosting colors are pink, pale blue, light green, and yellow.

Allow enough time to dry.

~HERE~

Materials:

Sugar paste candy (or a Dentist's Delight) – just take a look!)

Granulated sugar;

water;

powdered sugar;

food coloring;

a bowl for mixing;

a good strong pair of hands for modeling;

molds of any type – old footballs, basketballs, plastic egg cartons, etc.;

butcher paper cone with a hole in the narrow end and taped at the side for fine line icing (use a separate cone for each color).

Grease molds;

mix granulated sugar and water very slowly, adding just enough water to hold sugar together.

Using waxed paper as a working surface, fill mold or model your own piece.

If you want to add pieces to the sculpture, press in while moist – raisin eyes, a glob sugar nose or a hat.

Hand model pieces by holding thick paste firmly and pressing into the shape you want.

Let the piece dry.

Give it life with frosting.

Mix powdered sugar with food coloring and enough water to make a smooth, controllable frosting.

Make sure your paper cone has the right size opening on the small end for the decorative icing.

Put the mixture into the large end and squeeze and squirt for line decorations.

Ideas for modeling include skulls, skeletons, crosses with squirted flowers, chickens, trees, dolphins, ladies, men in sombreros, hearts, angels and guitars. There is no end to the possibilities of subjects made or ways to decorate them.

State of Puebla

The vast array of art the people of Puebla produced is impossible to present here.

The great variety of pottery, highly finished and sophisticated Talavera Pottery which was brought from Spain and is used for making tiles, dishes and pots.

These old Spanish designs are, predominately, in blue and yellow-gold and white, and have been retained.

A wonderfully fanciful pottery pours forth from Puebla, with such wonders as stacked, unglazed animals standing on top of each other in *giddy, gaudy colors* and beautiful Trees of Life (or elaborate candle holders).

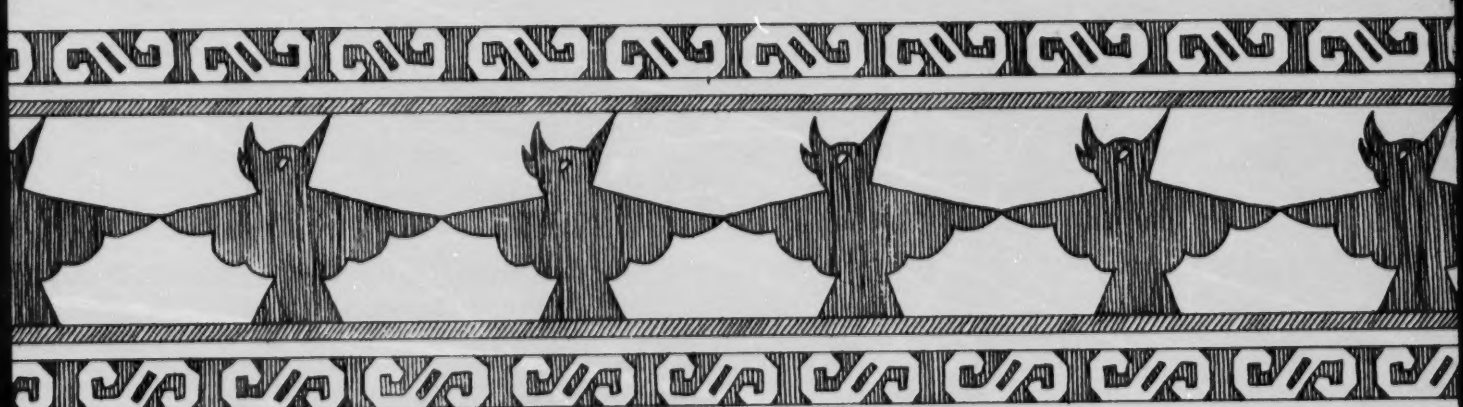
You may see charming representations of Jonah and the Whale and Noah and the Ark or *Camote* (Sweet Potato Candy).

Pueblans produce an astonishing number and type of miniatures, even a wedding in a nut-shell (see Toys and Miniatures).

The masks are charming and the black shawls rather scarce and are overwhelming in their richness and diversity. These are woven with magnificent color contrasts in the bright pinks, yellows and other colors of flower petals.

Choices were made here.

You will have help from books, films, and people in discovering some other goodies.



Papel Amate con Brujas - Bark Paper with Witches

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Bark from wild fig tree (for brown paper);

Bark from the mulberry tree (for white paper);

(Pull bark from trees in a full moon in the Spring.)

a running stream;

lime water;

a big copper kettle;

rough rectangular-shaped boards;

smooth boards;

flat stone; and

a sunny day.

The men gather the bark, peeling it off the trees in the growing season.

They wash it and boil it in copper kettles, with lime water, using only the inner strips of bark.

Women crisscross the wet strips (never mingling colors).

Beating the strips together into a pulp on the boards, they gradually blend it together, forming a sheet of brown or white *amate* paper (depending on which tree bark was used).

After the papers are dried, they are peeled off the wood and put in stacks for sale; for shipment to Guerrerro and bright decorations (see Guerrero Papel Pintado) for sale in the local market, or, perhaps, to fill a special order for the local Medicine Man.

The papers are cut into shapes of all sorts of spirits, good (barefeet), evil and strange (with shoes on), good (white paper), bad (dark paper).

The paper is cut on the fold. Very often when the paper is opened, the figures has 4 arms and hands.

Some have hair growing straight up on the head, some have 2 birds' heads with double feathers.

These are to protect the mountains.

Various dolls have beans or fruit hanging at each side in clusters.

The "spirits" are cut right into the folded shape and the *amate* is carried in his pockets by the Medicine Man to bless the harvest, cure the sick (by cutting "brown shoe-wearing" dolls and burning them on the spot or house where disease lurks).

White dolls are mounted on brown paper and are used as special home blessings, and now they all are sold to the tourists.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Brown paper bags or wrapping paper;

white paper bags or wrapping paper;

newspaper or newsprint;

a pan of water or a handy sink;

waxed paper for drying (to keep the piece from sticking);

scissors;

glue; and

strong knuckles.

Soak the paper long enough to really get it wet, rubbing gently with knuckles to break down the fiber.

The sheets should be dried for our purposes of "spirit making."

The pieces are cut on the fold, so practice making designs and figures on newspaper and newsprint.

Emphasis should be placed on the concept that this is a custom which dates back to before Columbus days and is studied to see the art and the values of the people.

Points to emphasize – shoes on means "bad spirits";

shoes off means "good spirits";

brown paper is "bad."

Camote - Sweet Potato

THERE

Materials:

Sweet potatoes, boiled, skinned and drained;

pineapple, cleaned, cooked, drained and strained, or

other fruits, such as guavas;

strainers;

cooking vessels;

pastry tube or paper cornucopia (cone shaped)

powdered sugar;

water;

food colors;

a wood fire.

HERE

Materials:

Same materials as **THERE**, but substitute canned pineapple for fresh pineapple;

electric skillet;

crockpot.

Mix pineapple and sweet potato;

strain;

mold into loaves about 4" long and 1" thick and wide.

Prepare a sugar-powdered dusting for the loaves.

Mix icings of various colors by blending powdered sugar with a little water, and separating icing so that there can be various colors.

With a pastry tube or a paper cornucopia, paint lovely pastel-colored flowers, birds, scrolls, and names on the top.

Let stand until the candy is firm and the decoration is firm *before selling to the Camote shopkeeper where they can be boxed, displayed and sold. This is the same for THERE and HERE.*

Papel Picado - Paper Banners

These are used to decorate, for worship, and for portraying scenes of every day life. Themes can vary from a Manger scene in shiny paper to a guitar-playing rooster, or flowers and butterflies.

THERE

Materials:

Tissue paper or metallic paper (for special days);

knife or razor blade;

a plan of action and design.

The design motifs can be whimsical, religious or abstract.

Plan the design on a piece of plain paper and then on the tissue paper or shiny paper.

Usually the paper or papers to be cut are stacked or sitting alone in the artisan's studio.

After the design plan is complete, the cutting begins.

With the paper opened out, the picture is cut or designed with a sharp knife.

Most of the artists have the "subject" centered to cut around.

To keep this from being cut right out of the paper, the center is linked to the edge of the picture with a lattice work, so that there are no "floaters" or pieces not being touched by their next door neighbor.

◇HERE◇

Materials:

Tissue paper in various colors;

metallic paper, if available;

scissors (the sharper the better);

crayons or pencils and paper for planning.

Fold the paper in half, and in half again and then again.

Plan the design as circles or diamonds, both, or variations on the theme.

Cut it out.

Open it out, enjoy it, and think of ways you might want to work next time.

Some of the older youngsters might wish to work with one fold only.

Be sure not to make the mistake made by the happy child in this picture.

Once she lets go of her banner it will fall apart!

All of the edges must be linked together. The edges can be scalloped, fringed or plain.

The paper can be long or short, thin or fat.

Banners can be hung or mounted on another piece of paper of different color or texture

They may be hung by fastening them to a suspended wire, paper clips, safety pins or cloths pins.

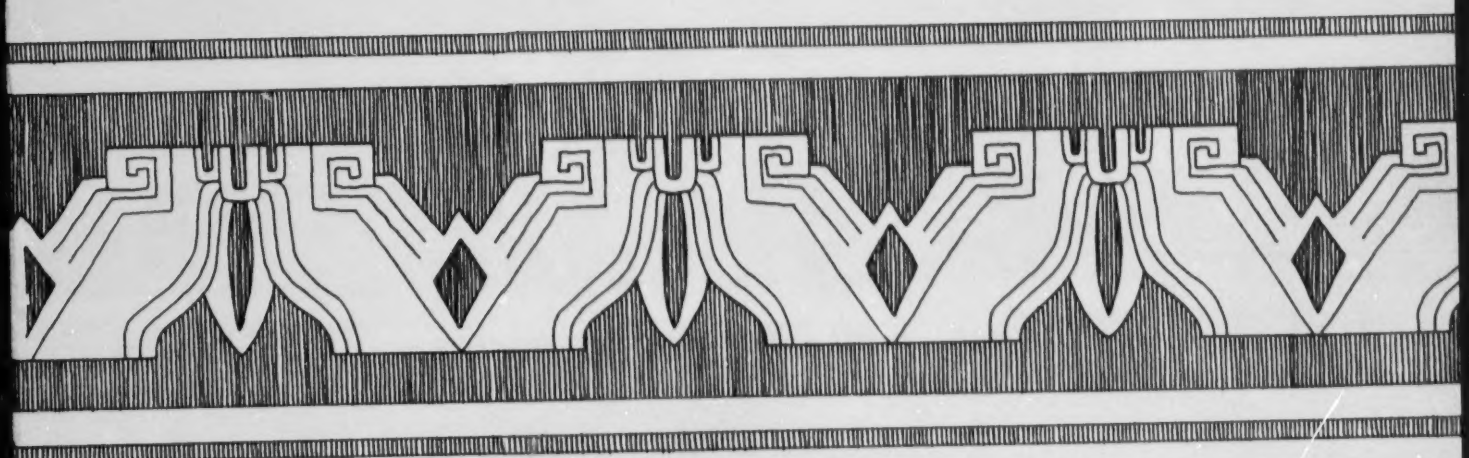
The effect is very beautiful.

Southern Mexico
State of Oaxaca

Oaxaca is truly *the state of the crafts.*

You will also see strong contrasts, from beautifully-embroidered velvet Tehuana *Huipiles* to the coarsely-woven burlap-like *Huipiles* found in other parts of the State.

These can be the end point of two extremes with great abundance and variety in the middle.



Huipiles - Loose Fitting Blouse or Dress

There are a lot of Huipil styles.

The area of Oaxaca is warm and these loose-fitting garments are cool and charming in themselves.

They are great for those hot summer days.

A trip to the Tehuantepec region where the weather is hot, dry, and very dusty is *revealing, but not in the usual sense.*

The Tehuantepecs are most frequently all Indian.

There appears to be great ethnic pride.

The customs and costumes persist.

The women are *visibly* in charge!

They hold public office, run the market and do it all in long dresses in very hot weather.

It is said that the men arise early and go to the fields to do agricultural work. When seen, they are quiet, probably tired.

There is a story, and it probably is true:
A European ship was wrecked just off the coast and the Tehuantepec women, not only admired, but copied much of the clothing found on the ship; as *velvet Huipiles and velvet skirts with yards and yards of white ruffling at the hem of the skirts.*

These are embroidered with huge flowers and come in a variety of colors.

Many truly bright, pretty Huipiles are made from synthetic imported fabric, and are worn with a long skirt and the ever-present ruffle.

White petticoats, stiffly starched, made of eyelet embroidered cotton are under all the skirts, and for sale at the markets.

For formal occasions the women wear an elaborate head dress with a white ruffle framing the face, and bright colored fabric hanging down in back.

This is covered by two stiffly starched pieces of double fabric with starched lace at the ends.

Well, these were baby dresses from the wrecked ship.

The fabric is the body of the dress, the narrow, ruffled pieces are trim for the sleeves.

The women keep making and using these and seem a little disturbed if you believe that they use baby dresses for adorning their heads.

They are beautiful head-dresses.

THERE

Materials:

Cotton fabric — coarse or fine;

velvet for Tehuantepec *Huipiles;*

needles and thread;

embroidery floss and needles;

Backstrap Loom to weave cloth;

scissors.

Lots of weaving of cotton and wool is done in Oaxaca.

The style is portrayed here and fashioned with embroidery.

They can be made of velvet with enormous *satin stitch* flowers (Juchitan and Tehuantepec).

They can be of cotton that is like sheeting with a satin stitch or a cross stitch combination, as shown.

Often the neckline is just a wide slit and no additional opening.

Sometimes it is a "V" and again a "U" neckline.

They can be of gauzy material through which yarns have been handwoven for added interest and color (and to get away from that complete *"peek-a-boo"* look).

Most have no real sleeves, but are heavily embroidered on the yoke and hem and all over.

Some are very bright and have been started as works of embroidery art for charming Lily Gilding.

Satin stitches and *cross stitches* are used the most frequently.

Huipiles seldom, if ever, have a belt.

∘HERE∘

Materials:

Sheets or other large pieces of white cotton;

burlap bags (for thread-pulling and rewoven *peek-a-boo* Huipiles);

yarn;

pieces of velvet (Tehuantepec);

needle and thread;

sewing machine (optional);

embroidery floss and needles;

scissors.

Cut 2 pieces of fabric in squares or in rectangles;

sew these together with a slit or "U" neck opening.

Decorate by using the *cross stitch and satin stitch*, or

with pieces of velvet you can make a beautiful flower-strewn Tehuantepec *Huipil*.

Flowers, birds, trees, etc. help make *Huipiles* even more beautiful.

Cerámica Negra - Black Pottery

The area near Oaxaca is rich with black clay that becomes a silvery burnished color when fired.

Black pottery making is a big "Cottage Industry" business in this region, and one gifted, frail lady, Doña Rosa, seems to have the market cornered, and she *truly does have a corner market!*

Toy whistles made in the shape of mermaids, fish, birds, deer, bells that ring, whistling flutes, angels with fragile wings, and necklaces made of a strung-together, repeated shapes are among those pieces fashioned by hand.

Always string beads on sturdy homemade string.

Pots are made on "saucer wheels." Clay is put on 2 saucers, one upside down so that it can be turned.

This is spun with one hand and fashioned with the other for evenness, using a piece of wet leather.

∘THERE∘

Materials:

Black clay dug from the earth in the state of Oaxaca, near the town of Cayótepec;

2 saucers for a wheel;

a piece of tin;

piece of quartz;

a kiln;

clear glaze;

able hands for fashioning water jars;

perforated pots for washing and straining maize.

Let the piece dry for a spell, rub with a piece of tin; after more drying, scrape off polish into a design with a piece of quartz or reed.

This is the time to scratch in the decorations.

Everything is polished before putting it in a "pit kiln" which gleans its warmth from the sun and the pit fire.

The pieces are baked all through the night.

The next morning the mud and chard are removed and the pieces are stained with a black, thin liquid that makes them fairly glisten, and *glisten "fairly."*

∘HERE∘

Materials:

Black clay from Oaxaca or black-tempered Baker's Clay, *Migajón* or Mâché Mash;

Breakfast Salad;

Homemade Gesso;

dental floss for bead stringing;

2 saucers for a wheel;

black tempera;

scratchers like forks, spoons or knives;

a slick work surface (taped-down wax paper).

Shape some pieces by hand;

dry;

glaze with Breakfast Salad.

(See Baker's Clay; *Migajón*; and Mâché)

Make mermaids, fish, birds, deer, bell-shaped skirted angels, teeny fish with wire;

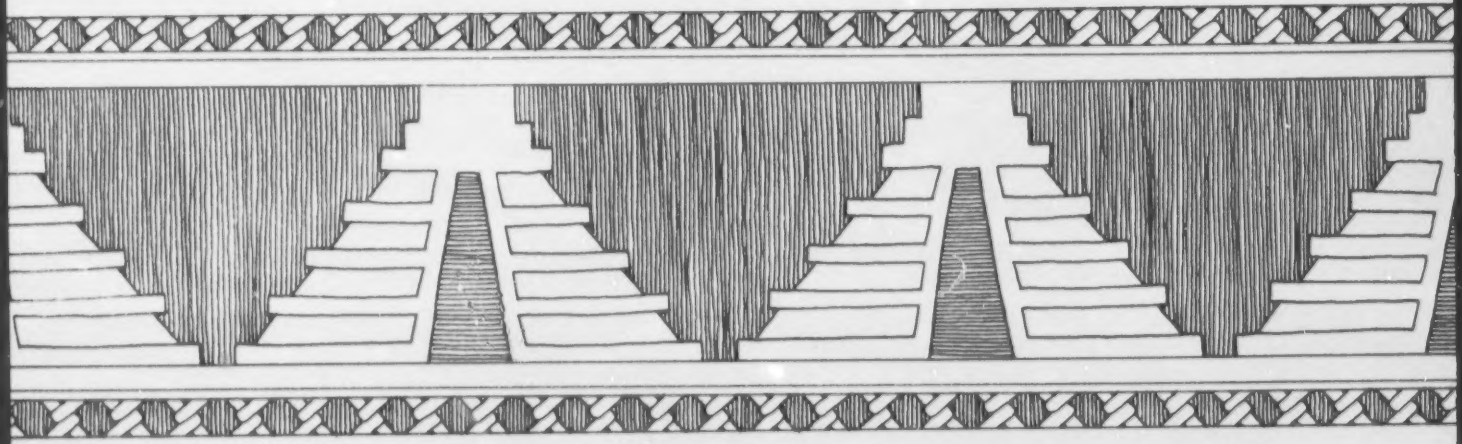
bake and dry for stringing on a dental floss necklace.

Use the saucer wheel as shown in the THERE section for making little pots.

Let pieces dry and prepare for polishing. Give them a coat of Homemade Gesso; scratch through a very simple design, geometric or natural, and bring the gloss with the Breakfast Salad or floor wax.

State of Yucatán

Yucatán is probably best known for the "art of its past." A folk commercial art is practiced by almost everyone to a greater or lesser degree. Reproductions of "small" pyramids and copies of carved gods, made from granite, added to copies of thousand-year-old ceramic pots, made and sold to the tourists by the thousands.



Reproduciones de las Escultura Mayan - Copies of Pre-Columbian Mayan Sculpture

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Pieces of granite;

hammer;

chisel;

dynamite (for blasting forth the granite or volcanic rock);

selected pieces of the blasted rock;

a rasp and coarse sandpaper for smoothing;

experience in working with granite, such as how to plan all four sides and carving.

Make exact replicas of artifacts and miniatures of Mayan structures.

They are very big with tourists.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

3 parts of Plaster of Paris;

5 parts zanolite or vermiculite (available at plant nursery);

1 part wheat paste;

1½ parts sand;

tempera paint;

sandpaper;

empty milk cartons;

table knife and spoon.

Mix the above ingredients (for a softer mix, increase the amount of zanolite or vermiculite; for a harder mix, reduce the amount of zanolite or vermiculite).

Mix the ingredients with tempera paint if you like (rusty red and black are best).

Add enough water to make a thick consistency.

Pack into empty milk cartons and let dry for 2 days with sides up and 2 days with 2 sides peeled back.

Share together slides, pictures, artifacts of granite pieces still made in the Yucatan.

Make sketches to put on a side as a carving guide.

Carve with knives and spoons; use forks and coarse sandpaper for texture and polish.

You will all be surprised!

Don't feel limited to Mayan pre-Hispanic carved granite replicas.

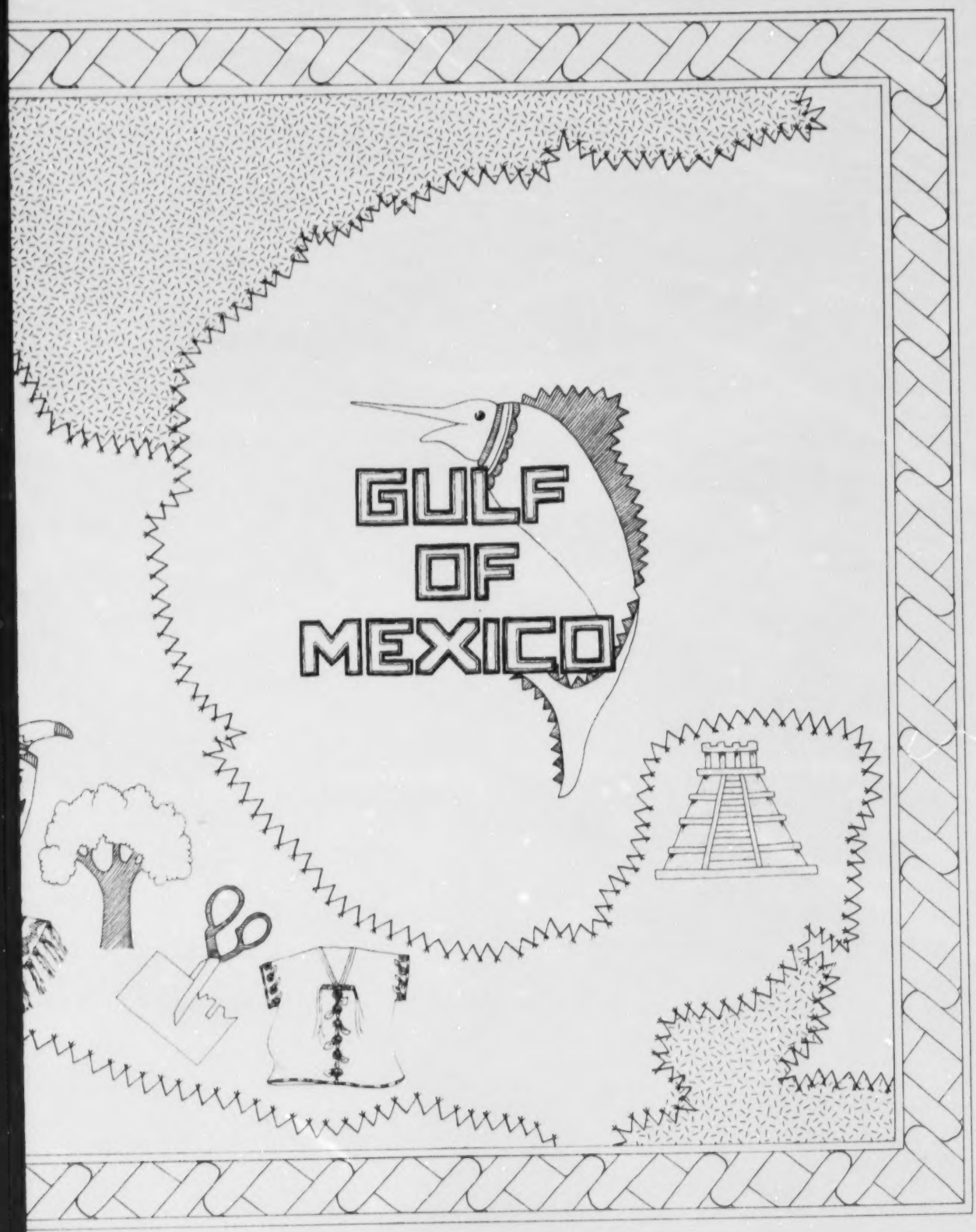
It is essential, however, to the development of clear concepts that the children identify region and culture.

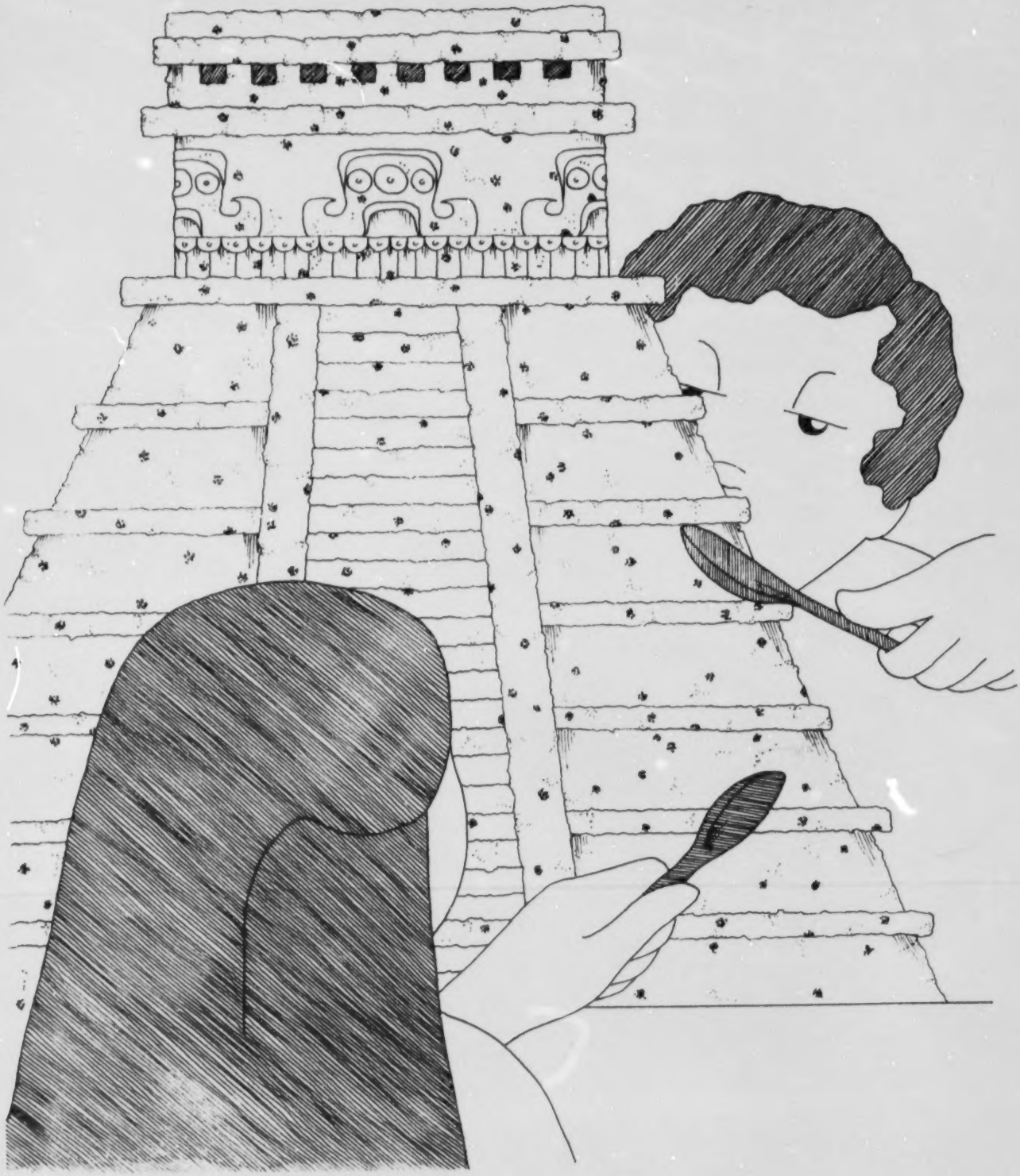
Note: Get vermiculite or zanolite at a plant nursery; wheat paste at a hardware store; and sand at the beach or at a builders' supply store.

MEXICO

LEGEND

- YARN PAINTING — Nayarit & Jalisco
- BARK PAINTING — Guerrero
- PAPIER MÂCHÉ MASK — Guanajuato
- PAPER CUT-OUT — Puebla
- REBOZA — Michoacan
- GRANITE PYRAMID — Yucatán
- HUIPIL — Veracruz & Oaxaca
- TREE OF LIFE — Mexico


GULF
OF
MEXICO



All over Mexico

Rebozos - Scarves

Rebozos were introduced by the Spaniards to cover the heads of poor women in the churches.

They are now used for everything, from keeping warm to carrying babies. A standard size is generally used: 1 yard wide and 2½ yards in length. In the state of Michoacán, the *rebozos* vary a bit from those in the rest of Mexico.

The background is dark blue with a white lengthwise stripe and often bright yarns or feathers are used for fringe.

◦THERE◦

Materials:

A Backstrap Loom, a yard wide, or an upright loom;

cotton yarns, usually in white (to be dyed as the process continues);

vat dyes in blacks, greys or blues;

yarns;

The cotton is folded into hanks or skeins;

these are firmly tied in the special places that are to remain white, then plunged into the dye vat and — *thereby comes the pattern!*

The weaving reveals the simple design, and the fringes make them more finished in appearance.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Old sheets or other fairly lightweight material;

crayons or Milky Tempera in dark earth tones (black, grey or dark blue).

Plan the design on paper and sketch on the fabric, making the standard size listed above.

Paint or crayon it as indicated. The background usually remains white.

If your youngsters can finish raw edges, that's even better.

Wear it with pride but *"please don't drop the baby."*

Serapes

These are made all over Mexico, generally of wool, but of varying weights, sizes, etc.

They are overcoats, blankets, wall decorations, and are made to last a while. Generally, *serapes* are made of two lengths sewn together with a slit in the middle for the head.

In San Miguel de Allende, some of the most beautiful *serapes* have been and are still being produced.

Many are used by Mexicans and bought and used by tourists. They are made from heavy wool yarn with geometric shapes skillfully planned and worked into a pattern.

The warp threads are generally white; the loose ones at each end of the finished piece are tied, making the fringe.

◦THERE◦

Materials:

A loom, usually upright, but sometimes the horizontal or Backstrap;

yarn, usually wool, in colors of grey, brown, black, blue, red, orange, green and magenta;

skilled weavers;

patterns — the patterns are not only generally preplanned, but have been planned for a hundred years or so.

Designs are as varied as a blue background with diamond shapes; geometric designs of contrasting center colors; black and white edged stripes.

They can be made coarse and tightly-woven or lightweight and loosely-woven with stylized animal designs on soft gray centers with black and white striped borders, or made just like the Mexican Flag but with brown and blacks with red centers.

Brighter colors are now being used for the tourist trade.

Serapes vary in length according to regional and weather differences but are large enough to cover a man.

Make a sketch of the pattern to be woven or stick to the traditional designs.

Put white cotton warp threads on the loom unless a particular custom dictates otherwise.

Prepare the separate color skeins and tie them in place on the loom. You are now ready to make the *serape* of your choice!

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Paper;

crayons to plan design;

burlap or other rather coarse material;

crayons or milky tempera in colors of grey, brown, black, blue, red, orange, blue and magenta for decorating the *serapes;*

brushes;

scissors.

We are about to make a simulated *serape.*
(Boys and girls, you had better look up "simulated" so you'll know what you're up to!)

Plan your design to fit the burlap with as much background space as possible.

Sketch it on the cloth to be embellished. Decorate according to tradition, using crayons or milky tempera.

To make a rug:

Using a piece of burlap with raw edges, pull threads from each end to make a fringe; or, you can paint or draw the "native" design with milky tempera or waxed crayons.

Piñatas

These may be individually the loveliest, the funniest, or the silliest or the grandest or most precious examples of Mexican Folk Art, and you can find them in various shapes, from baseball bats and billy clubs to *baby roses in a vase* and billy goats almost anywhere!

Many are made in the state of Mexico.

The star is the most popular or most frequently used.

They seem not to have had a beginning, but to have always been around in Spain and its colonies.

Navidad sin piñatas es un gran error - Christmas without a *piñata* is not Christmas!

Most children's birthday parties would fall short of success without a *piñata.*
The *piñata* custom: An opening is left in the *piñata's* top, through which wrapped candy, tangerines, peanuts and other child fillers are dropped. The opening is sealed shut with paper and the *piñata* strung up on a rope. A big person is holding the rope at each end. A blindfolded child is given a stick for *piñata* breaking, but the *piñata* just runs and hides until the holders get tired!

◦ THERE ◦

Materials:

An *olla* (clay pot);

cardboard;

materials for Papier Mâché;

crepe paper (it's nice and stretchy);

and/or colored tissue paper (it's lovely and delicate, depending on the shape of things to come);

metallic paper, yarn, ribbons, velvet, cardboard for ears and things, small boxes for little feet or a cone for a star point or nose, etc. are all part of the *piñata* experience.

Start with the *olla;* Build the basic shape you need over the basic shape that is dry and *"ready to go,"* i.e., fasten the curved ears to the donkey, points to the star, etc. or tape a cardboard nose or wings to an angel with wire.

The Mexican artist has all sorts of innovative ways of creating the entire piece and make it sturdy enough to swing and sway.

Use 15 3' strips of crepe or tissue paper and fringe them, or curl the ends and let them flutter; the sizes and numbers vary;

use deeper cuts for a fluffy fringe.

Foil eyes, feather lashes, yarn braids tails all go with a hundred other surprises to make *piñatas* the pride of Mexico.

◦ HERE ◦

Materials:

Balloon, beachball, box, or a shape close to the shape of the piece to be formed;

Vaseline;

materials for Papier Mâché;

scissors;

glue or paste;

crepe paper or tissue paper;

other bits and pieces of beautiful things — scraps of yarn, metallic paper, etc.

Piñata making is usually a family production and your whole class can be a supportive family.

Encourage building strengths by the example you set.

Build the piece over the Vaselined balloon.

When the Mâché is hard, deflate balloon with a pin and pull it through the opening.

Always leave a lightly-covered hole for holding the goodies.

Add cardboard pieces, little boxes, etc., to change the basic shape but be sure that all joints are well anchored with tape, wires, or brads, etc.

All *piñatas* want to be beautiful, even for just a day, so use all sorts of papers, paints, yarns, ribbons, etc., to make yours very beautiful.

When you have many beautiful creations of any kind in your classroom, keep your eye on how each is beautiful in its own way, not which is the most beautiful.

That is Mexican.

Pottery - Bright and Beautiful

(from Metepec, the state of Mexico and from the state of Pueblo – find them on your culture maps)

The similarities are so great that this will be treated as one process (**HERE** and **THERE**) except where there may be great process or product differences.

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Clay;

hands;

molds (where used);

paints (tempera or soft color glazes);

texturizers (sticks, stones, metal tools, etc.);

kiln;

wire;

tin snips.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Clay or clay substitutes: Baker's Clay (made and baked over a mold, such as foil);

Papier Mâché Mash; or

Migajón , (especially for small pieces, such as suns and piglets);

ovens;

cardboard tubes, corrugated cardboard;

texturizers (sticks and stones);

spoons, screw drivers, forks;

enamel;

Homemade Gesso;

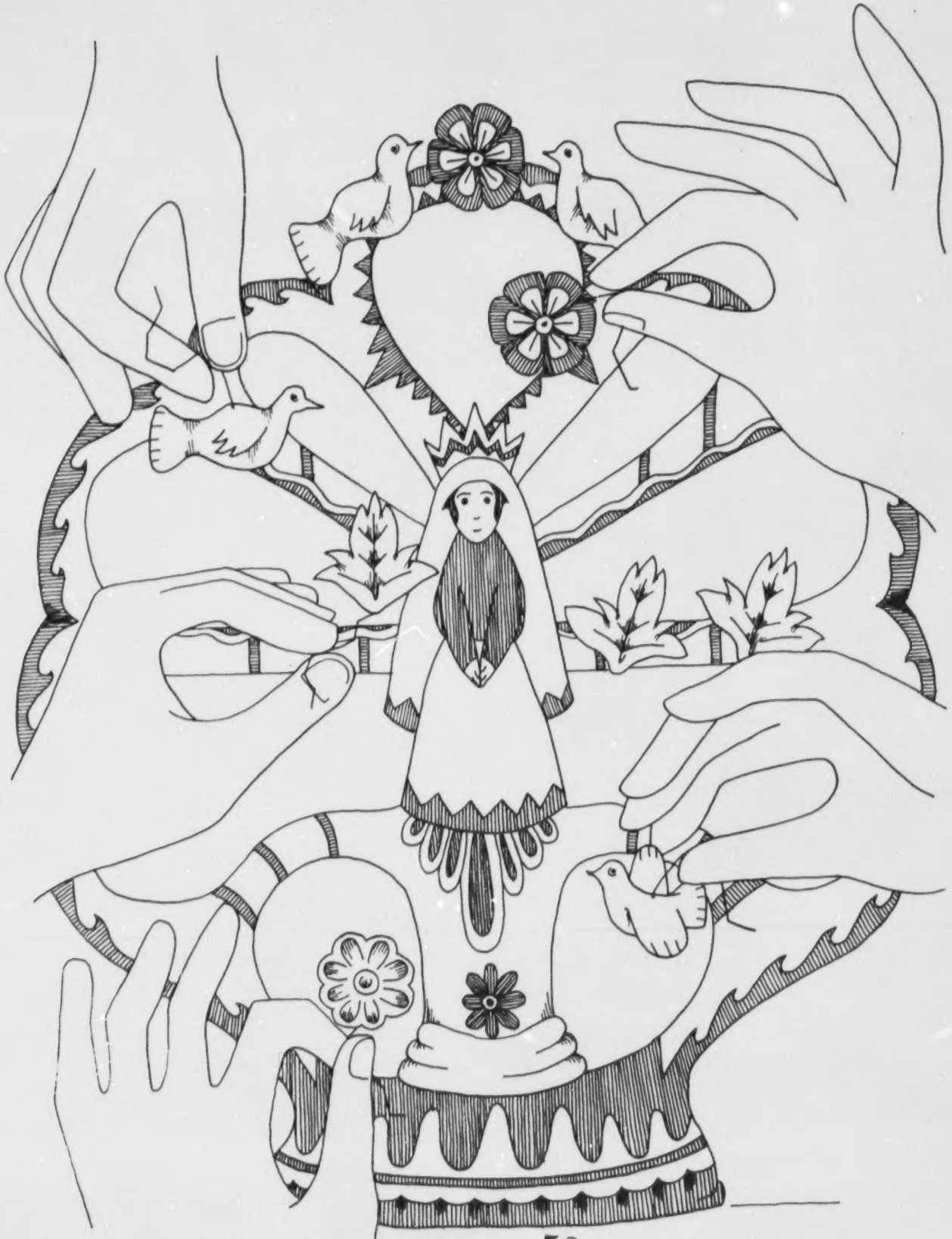
tempera;

Breakfast Salad.

White doves with pastel tempera painted-on "feathers"; green and yellow trumpet-playing rabbits; lavender-crowned mermaids playing guitars; brave yellow, red or orange or un-painted and glazed bulls (with ridges for growing herbs); flower-covered pink pigs; goats; tricky see-sawing puppy dogs; Jonah and the whale; Noah and the Ark. Suns from little to big, rotund or flat, *but always smiling*, may be seen all over Mexico, but they are usually born and decorated in the states of Mexico or Puebla.

Fired once, most of these pieces are painted with a matte-like tempera; glazed (Breakfast Salad **HERE**) and re-fired.

They are all bright and shiny, but in Metepec only there are pottery pieces with the shape of those last mentioned, but in muted blues, greys, russets, etc., with a heavy glaze. Here, in the classroom, some are painted in muted pastel tones from the teeniest sun to the grandest 8 foot Tree of Life.



Arbol de la Vida - The Tree of Life

•THERE•

Make a clay base with arm-like circular branches.

Fashion add-on pieces by modeling in clay or using pre-made clay molds. Be sure to press the embellishers right into the waiting tree so there is a "unit" ready to be baked.

•HERE•

Make the base like a central trunk and circular branches.

Put the "embellishers" on firmly so the unit will dry and become as one piece.

Build, no matter what material you use, e.g., clay, Baker's Clay, strip and Mache mash over corrugated cardboard tree trunks, wire, chicken wire or cardboard tubes (trunks, too) or foil.

Use wire as a base for *Migajón,* Baker's Clay and Mache branches.

What to add: Always blossoms, leaves, little wire-hung balls (birds in Puebla) and often cherubs, doves, fish, Virgin Mary (Adam and Eve and Serpent in Metepec).

The number and variety of additions is endless.

The colors vary from gallantly glaring to soft and suave.

Making and Using Miniatures and Other Toys

A little background; Mexicans can find or make miniatures for themselves to enjoy or their children to "grow up with" that will cost almost nothing, bring great joy, and teach a good deal about the life to come as adults, especially for women in the home.

Miniatures of just about anything that relates to the Art of the Folk are fashioned and can be simulated in your classroom.

They are simply made tiny toys that still give joy all over the place in Mexico and where ever else they find their way.

Upper grade children can make miniatures for small children.

Miniatures All Over Mexico

In Mexico miniature furniture is made from cupal trees and lavishly decorated with frills and scallops.

Alfiñique is used for fashioning plates and fruit.

Lead is used for tiny tableware, tin stoves, lanterns, dustpans, pitchers, sauce pans, frilly mirrors and picture frames, gleaming or bright with paint.

Baskets galore are made in miniature and could be made like the big ones, soaking the reeds, dying, shaping, and drying.

A rush broom won't give you a rush job.

In the classroom, Baker's Clay and *Migajón* are well adapted to miniatures.

Paint them like the grown-up pieces and shine them with Breakfast Salad.

Use corrugated cardboard for furniture and foil for mirrors.

Use Sugar Art *(Alfiñique)* for fashioning plates and fruit.

Make tableware from TV dinner trays.

All sorts of tin pieces can be made from tin can lids and foil trays.

Apply No More Shine to the surface to make a proper surface to paint on.

List of Miniatures

FROM STATES THROUGHOUT MEXICO

GUANAJUATO

Little kitchen cupboards made of clay or cardboard; *Alfiñique* fruits, frogs, mermaids, crosses, angels, skulls, little chickens, lambs with sugar "wool"; miniature pottery (Baker's Clay and *Migajón*); clay household pieces; wooden miniatures of household furniture; wood with glass for mirrors (corrugated cardboard and foil mirrors).

The number of furniture pieces is never ending, so here is the beginning: tables and chairs; dressers and wardrobe closets (with foil mirrors); nutshell weddings made by sawing through the "short center" of the nut, then again through the back end to the cut. Open it, *oh so gently,* removing the nut meat and replacing it with a whole wedding. *Migajón* can be used for the wedding party!

Other toys: Papier Mâché masks and toys; clay toys made and fired by children; *piñatas;* tin mirrors and picture frames; Papier Mâché puppets and figures; clowns; monsters; big horses; tin pots and pans; pitchers, and teensy plates (foil pans).

GUERRERO

Clay toys made by and for the children, honoring Corpus Christi; miniature lacquer bowls and boxes; little pots like the big ones.

JALISCO

Pottery pieces and nests of little everythings from cooking sets to coffee and tea sets.

Rag dolls (made all over Mexico, too); these are for real; the heads, bodies, arms and legs are all made of rags and stuffed with rags.

Busy rag dolls; creating crafts; sitting at a Backstrap Loom (the loom and all!); making *tortillas* with one in the hand and one in the basket.

Rag dolls can do everything!

Yarn dolls: with yarn on the inside and stuffed with rags; the boy is distinctive - he wears a hat; the girl is distinctive - she wears a dress.

Miniatures of Chicle (partly colored and chewed chewing gum) made into beautiful baskets of fruits (looking every inch porcelain).

Clay piggy banks, whistles, just for fun animals and jumping jacks.

QUERÉTARO

Wooden dollhouse furniture; little leather saddles and sandals.

VERACRUZ

Pottery or substitutes (*Migajón* or Baker's Clay); horsemen and dolls; and vanilla bean miniatures (also made in Yucatan) with pretty birds and flowers made with and for children from paper.

MICHOACÁN

Rag dolls; pottery; toys; sets of dishes and kitchen ware; also nests of copper pots; little lacquer pieces; little fiber pieces (be sure to soak the fiber) made as trains, planes, Ferris wheels, bikes, cowboys *(charros)*, angels, baskets, *petates* (rugs), *metates* (mats), "rush" brooms not larger than a finger, little boats, and fishermen.

PUEBLA

Little Trees of Life of clay and clay substitutes (Baker's Clay, *Migajon*, and Papier Mache); little pottery; little folks woven from palm leaves; horses and folks painted with tempera and varnished; a "room on the half shell" - a half of a walnut with a scene inside and glass over the top; *Alfiñique* skulls, bread, and little fruits and vegetable pieces.

OAXACA

Miniatures; pottery (Baker's Clay and *Migajón*); little ladies painted white with bright color decorations; pre-Columbian turtle rattles; little animals; pottery houses, horses and pieces of almost everything in black clay from vases to mermaids as well as little birds.

SAN LUIS POTOSI

Corn shuck dolls.

STATE OF MEXICO

Miniature wooden furniture; little Trees of Life; marionettes, to be made for or by children (illustration shown).

TABASCO

Chicle animals and fruit (also found in Jalisco).

Marionettes

Materials:
A Papier Mache head with yarn hair glued on for a girl or a sombrero for a boy;

paint;

7 pieces of wood or stiff cardboard;
2 rectangular pieces will be put at cross purposes to each other; cloth for dressing them up;

string;

glue;

scissors.

Model the head of Mache Mash over a greased light globe put in a toilet paper roll, and then put on a Coke bottle for easy working;

paint; add yarn, buttons and other surprises from the box.

Fasten the head over the largest piece of wood;

get it dressed or suited;

fasten wood or cardboard hands at the ends of the arms, and shoes under the skirt or pants.

Fasten strings to the upper cross bars and thus to the heads, hands, feet and skirt (for curtsying).

These marionettes are made by the thousands in the same fashion throughout the country.

La Caja de Sorpresas - The Surprise Box

Have a box for glamorizing and authenticating art pieces.

If you, the teacher, will start such a box with a little yarn, some cloth, a feather and say, "the sky's the limit," buttons will come like rain or snow, old jewels will glitter and more cloth, yarn and feathers will fairly fly in.

You'll have a new source for doll, marionette and puppet dresses and costumes for everything and gilding for lilies.

Processes

Clay Pottery or Ceramic Clay

Clay is available in great supply all over Mexico.

First, the potter digs the clay, then kneads or wedges it to get rid of the air bubbles, and to make it smooth.

Some clay is hand-fashioned into piggy banks, Trees of Life, whistles, birds, suns, merry-go-rounds complete with riders, mermaids and thousands of miniatures (see Toys and Miniatures).

Some pots are made by the "slab" method (rolling, cutting, and joining).

Many pots are made on wheels.

Some are made using the "coil" method (making snakes and joining them).

Others are made by the "pinch" method (put your fingers into a clay ball, turn and press, making a pot of your own choice).

Many more are made by casting, using a concave or convex mold, which are usually of fired clay or plaster.

Rolled-out moist clay is pressed into the two halves of the molds.

When dry enough to hold their own shape they are stuck together with some more wet clay. The piece is removed when almost dry by pulling off the two sides of the mold.

Details are added by hand.

Another way to cast clay is by pouring liquid clay, called "slip," into the mold.

After pots, etc., are formed they may be textured, carved, pierced, and so on.

Others are made with saucers (one upside-down on top of the right-side-up one) and the clay is turned on it like a wheel.

For color, paint with tempera and varnish or decorate with colored "slip" or glaze.

Cooking and eating vessels are glazed outside and inside.

The outdoor kiln is simple to make and use.

It is put in the dirt and the fire is fed with wood, reed, grass, corncobs, and other burnable bits and pieces.

The color of clay from any particular region dictates a good bit about the future of the piece, i.e., terra-cotta clay near Guadalajara, black clay from Oaxaca, etc., change the piece significantly.

Paper Product Backgrounds for Ceramic Designs

You can find cardboard boxes, food trays, paper plates that can be decorated in the shape they are in or can be soaked, perhaps starched a bit, dried and then decorated.

The children can, in this way, put emphasis on the particular kind of design with which the piece is embellished, i.e., a piece from the region of Tonolá, a primitive one from Michoacán, etc.

To get the basic shape of modeled ceramic as pigs and turtles, either clay or one of its malleable substitutes is in order, such as Baker's Clay.

Baker's Clay

Baker's Clay is an art medium in itself but will be more often used here because of the inaccessibility of clay, kilns, etc.

It can give the "clay experience" of modeling, decorating, etc.

Materials;

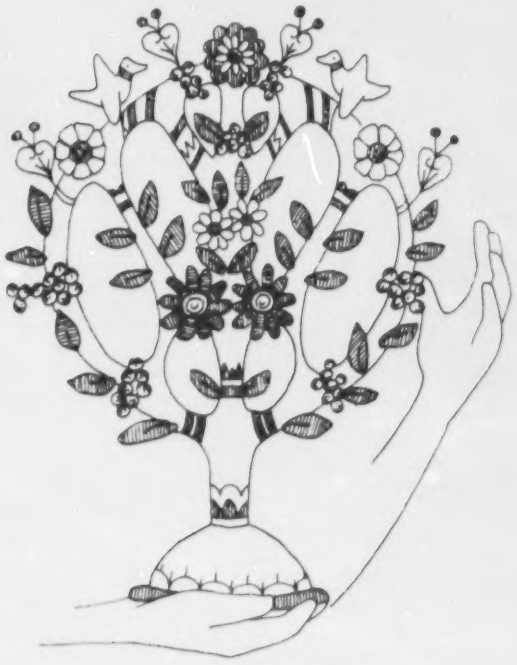
4 parts flour;

1½ parts salt;

1½ parts water.

Mix and knead all of the ingredients, the longer the smoother;

if you have a food processor it will take only a minute, or mix with a big spoon.



Model all sorts of pieces from the Tree of Life, to the Tree itself.

Textures can be produced by using a garlic press for hair , sticks and stones, forks and spoons or any object which can be employed to make a change in the surface by pressing or moving the unbaked clay piece.

The right cookie cutters will give flowers and leaves for your Tree of Life.

It is best, when making a piece with parts, to bake the parts separately (Tree of Life blossoms, etc.) but put wires in each part (i.e., in the part of the Tree where the parts will go and in the parts themselves).

When the parts are popped from the oven, take wire out of one piece and join parts at once, using the same wire in both pieces.

Any piece with height, such as a primitive pot or the Tree must be baked on a greased or Vaselined mold of crushed foil or in a greased oven-safe pot.

(If not baked over a mold, a large piece will collapse in the oven.)

Bake at 300° to 325° F for at least 1 hour, or until hard.

It is pretty when toasty brown.

Give it sheen with Breakfast Salad.

Colored Baker's Clay can be made with the addition of food coloring to the unmixed powder. Tempera paint and Breakfast Salad or melted crayons are two ways to color the Clay outside and make it shine. For a good, flat texture, substitute Homemade Gesso for Breakfast Salad.

Migajón or Bread Sculpture

Materials:

3 pieces of bread;

1 tsp. white glue;

3-4 drops lemon juice.

Break bread into little bits; add other ingredients; and knead for 10 minutes. (Bread and lemon juice can be kneaded in a food processor.)

Work on wax paper and keep dough refrigerated when not working with it.

Mexicans make jewelry from this, and Equadorians make figures of all sorts, and for you the *"sky is the limit"*, as illustrated by the *"sun"* right here.

You can use bread or any color or texture.

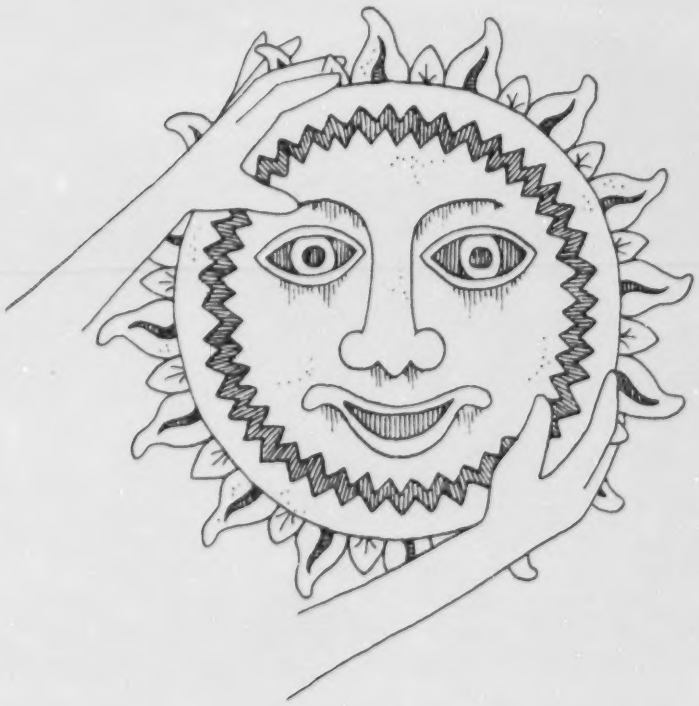
Fashion pieces, large or small, for their own charm or as a clay substitute.

No baking is necessary, but for a high gloss put into the oven at 350°F for 3 to 5 minutes.

Seal with a liquid of ½ part white glue to ½ part water.

These can be painted or mixed with food coloring.

Finish with Breakfast Salad.



Papier Mâché

The state of Guanajuato is a large producer of Papier Mâché.

Mexico City artisans are making all sorts of pieces to be sent out in the market place (those all over the country).

Skeletons, clowns, demon masks, hats, helmets, *piñatas*, and little tea sets are produced.

Most of the pieces are now made in factories.

Generally, these are like a chain of persons where each person takes on a step in the process and sends it to the next person who will take the next step.

Papier Mâché dolls, animals, huge merry-go-round horses, porcelain like figures can be added to the pieces already mentioned, and account for only a portion of the kinds of toys and other works of art in this medium, as pieces are made in many spots not mentioned here.

Let's get on with how to do it:

The processes as used in Mexico are given here.

Poem: *We really don't want to hear you say, "I'd rather use clay than Papier Mâché."*

Papier Mâché o Papel Cartón

◇THERE◇

Materials:

Cement bags;

paper towels;

varnish;

paste;

paints;

plaster or clay;

grease or Vaseline;

wood or wire.

Papier Mâché figures appear as yarn-jointed dolls, horses heads (for stick horses), demons, birds, and just about everything in the whole wide world.

Make a clay model of the piece you want to make over and over and over.

Next, a two-sectioned mold is made from clay or plaster over the model and fired or dried (ipso facto).

When the mold is ready, cast your lovely things.

Shear paper into small pieces; mix with the paste; and cook or beat until the consistency is quite smooth.

Pour into each half of the mold, then put together when a bit dry (pull a smidgin of the mold back for faster drying).

The pieces must be simple and each part must be cast separately.

Ears, noses, etc., can be added, but be sure to strengthen all jointed pieces with wood or wire.

You can also make a mold over which pasted strips (6 layers thick are built over the piece which has been greased with Vaseline) are placed.

Fruits and vegetables are at home here.

When the Mâché is dry, cut it in half and pull apart, remove the tasty thing, put the two halves together and join permanently with two pasted strips over the seams.

Decorations can surpass bright tempera and shellac and encompass that lovely world of found objects – feathers, ribbons, yarn, etc.

HERE

Materials:

Paper: Newspaper, paper towels, tissue paper sheets;

Vaseline;

pebbles or bells (optional);

brush or sponge;

liquid starch or wheat paste;

Homemade Gesso;

Milky Tempera;

Breakfast Salad;

Paper fasteners, wire, tape, glue for securing parts at joints.

Strip Mâché: This method is used over removable bases (bowls, fruits and vegetables, etc.) by using 5 layers of mache strips.

The inner piece must be oiled or greased and if it won't slip out, cut it into 2 parts, pull apart, and strip back together (putting in pebbles or bells for maracas).

Layers of strips can be used over permanent bases such as foil, cardboard tubes, chicken-wire, etc., for making monsters, animals, a base for the Tree of Life, and a clown, etc.

Use a different or alternating kind of paper for each layer, to see where you left off, such as a white sheet, then a layer using green sheets, white paper towel, tissue, then sheeting again, etc.

For the last layer tear paper into strips.

Don't cut paper, but tear for a feathery look.

Have some of the edges overlap.

Brush or sponge on liquid starch or wheat paste which will act as an adhesive.

Colored or white tissue can be a final coat for many mache pieces, for finishing boxes, cans, etc. and may be wired to the base for the right shape.

Mâché Mash: This can be made by tearing pieces of toilet paper; dip into a can of liquid starch; squeeze and then make into the puppet's eyes, cheeks or nose; or lumps and humps on a camel *piñata*.

This can then be covered again with strips of paper toweling or tissue.

This is an improvement over the old boiled newspaper version.

Pre-finish with Homemade Gesso and paint with Milky Tempera. Finish with Breakfast Salad.

Laminated Papier Mâché: Starch 5 layers of paper together in large sheets.

Brush starch right to the edges of each sheet.

Flatten the papers and cut into the shape you wish — a Metepec sun, a butterfly, a flower petal, etc.

Shape when wet, and let dry for 24 hours.

Paint.

This can be part of the Papier Mâché piece or can stand on its own merit.

Papier Mâché Wire Figures

There seems to be no end to the varieties of Mâché pieces that emerge from Mexico City. In the city Ilena de Ideas there are wire-formed people on bicycles, folks in cars, with Papier Mâché and strip building over-coats, painted as you wish and made to use the craftsman's skill and the artist's flourishing talent in the sophisticated city. Little "monsters" spring to life with their newspaper bases and their brightly painted faces (and all over).

◦THERE◦

Materials:

Flexible wire;

Mâché;

paint.

◦HERE◦

Materials:

Flexible steel or aluminum spool wire;

masking tape;

sweet and Milky Tempera;

liquid starch;

No More Shine.

Tape the figures together with masking tape; give them a brushdown with No More Shine; and paint them with sweet and Milky Tempera.

Backstrap Looms

Two pieces of wood. The yarn (the warp) is strung from one piece of wood to the other. The filler yarn is tied around a stick, and the weaving is done by almost magically making slits or a shed in the warp thread and drawing the yarn through. There are tremendous variations on this theme.

The resultant cloth is from 12" to 30" wide, and no longer than the warp threads. A cloth strap is tied to the bottom stick and around the weavers waist. A rope is tied around the upper stick and to a tree.

Soda Straw Looms

Soda Straw Looms are your class room equivalent to the Backstrap Looms.

Materials:

Soda straws; string; yarn; safety pin

Cut three straws in half. Suck a string through each of the six straw pieces. Knot the strings together at the end of the straws, with the loose ends of the knot long enough to be fastened around a tree or some object like a desk, and the strings are then drawn taut by tying the other end around the waist.

When this is done start weaving over and under the straws.

A safety pin, attached to the end of the yarn, makes the weaving easier. The woven section may be pushed up and off the straws, and the straws drawn down closer to the weaver.

Variations can be provided by tying different colors of yarn to the first yarn.

Weave away and continue until you have the length of cloth you want.

Burlap Weaving

Materials:

Burlap sheet, yarn, large needle or safety pin; sweet Milky Tempera; sweet chalk or crayons.

Burlap has a rough, earthy texture, not unlike many Mexican pieces of both cotton and wool.

It can be unwoven and rewoven, i.e., pull threads in one or both directions with a needle, bobby pin or a safety pin.

Choose the color and texture to suit your needs.

Reweave in colored yarn, feathers, etc., to turn it into a brand new piece — a *serape*, rug, or wall hanging, etc.

Draw it on the burlap and paint in the design in sweet Milky Tempera or sweet chalk; or glue yarn down in patterns on the burlap.

Plan designs, colors, spaces, textures then forge ahead.

Wood Box Looms

Materials:

Small headed nails; box; warp yarn and yarn for the shuttle; safety pins or bobby pins to use as yarn carriers or shuttles.

Drive nails from ½" to 1" apart.

Nails should be on the top edge of the box, parallel or opposite each other and should be equal distance apart.

Start stringing the yarn around the nails back and forth across so that there are parallel lines of warp yarn connecting each nail to its companion across the way.

Weaving: Select colors and patterns that will tell the story of a particular region, etc.

You may want to have several shuttles at once to vary the pattern, but you better start with one alone for practice. (i.e., wrap yarn around a bobby pin or safety pin shuttle and weave)

You can go over and under the warp threads.

Later, add textured materials like feathers, reeds, etc.

This is a good process as it offers a chance for design planning in yarn without the confusion of a more complicated process.

When you have finished the weaving, perk it up a bit with bright spots of embroidery.

It Hasta Be Pasta - or Rice

Mexico has almost as many shapes of *pasta* as would most respectable Italian grocery stores, so you can find them hither, thither and you if you're on the sharp lookout. *Arroz* (rice) is in huge bags or tiny boxes all over Mexico.

Pasta strings, like spaghetti, can be soaked, shaped (like the arch of a church, the curve of a flower petal, a Tree of Life, or the lengths of a brick),

For using *pasta* or rice in your classroom, here are procedural tips: Wet *pasta* only when you want to shape it, then let it dry in its new shape; use as flat a surface as possible; white glue is the best for glueing *pasta* to *pasta*, to clay, Mâché or either kind of bread dough art; prepare the pieces to be "rice rendered" or "*pasta* plated" with Homemade Gesso (one undercoat and one over in preparation for painting); use Milky Tempera for sealing (use canned or mixed powdered milk straight); use strong, liquid instant coffee for antiquing; finish with Breakfast Salad for shine.

Rice can be used for: Texture-like hair or very small tiles on a diorama roof; the features on a small Mâché figure or green grass in a nut-shell; *rote* (wheels) on "just to look at" Mâché bikes or cars, or Baker's Clay figures.

Stelline can be used for the various star shapes sizes for centers of the Trees of Life; flowers; for the night sky, on a mural or diorama; for dressing a greasy spoon pendant (soon to be painted or covered firmly with foil); for daisies in a garden or shells on a beach.

Use dental floss to hold the *pasta* pieces on a silver necklace. Little *pasta* hearts can be used in all sorts of decorative ways; *pues, cuidado!* Use on miniatures: little clothes pin dolls (the old fashioned kind with ruffles and cuffs); *Canestrini* (bow ties with buckle *pasta*, where a buckle ought to be); *Tubetini* (small tubes) for decorating little dishes, pots, tea sets, and so forth;

Decorate tin mirrors and picture frames with cardboard; (foil and yarn-textured authenticity) in just the right pattern of *pasta*.

Buy a great variety of *pasta* pieces; store them in egg cartons, jars, and so forth, but with an eye always cast in their direction, you'll add to the joy and success of your simulated Mexican Folk Art.

You can make *pasta* cardboard and foiled *pasta* fit for a king, *but can you make the king fit for the pasta?*

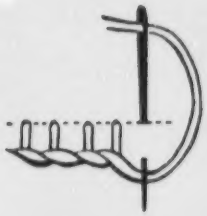
Embroidery

Materials:

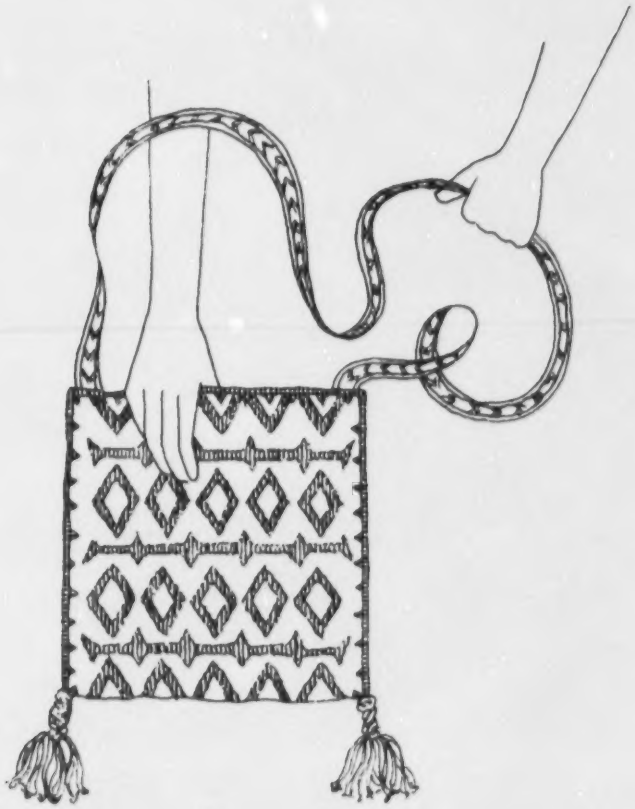
Yarn, needles, fabric, and a stitch in mind.

Cross stitch

Satin stitch



Blanket stitch



Puppets, Masks, Murals and Culture Maps

(for Bringing Concepts to Life)

Dramatizations of craftmaking folk art in Mexico, market day, or preparing a dinner, etc., will help clarify and unify thoughts.

Through quick puppets, masks, murals and maps, real concepts are developed and programs enriched.

What's going on in a puppet?

Behind a mask?

Into a mural?

In that *pueblo* on the map?

Your children can lose themselves as they plan, practice and present a show to show and tell with puppets.

General materials for the background piece, as a big box stage or a table well-dressed for the occasion:

colored construction paper;

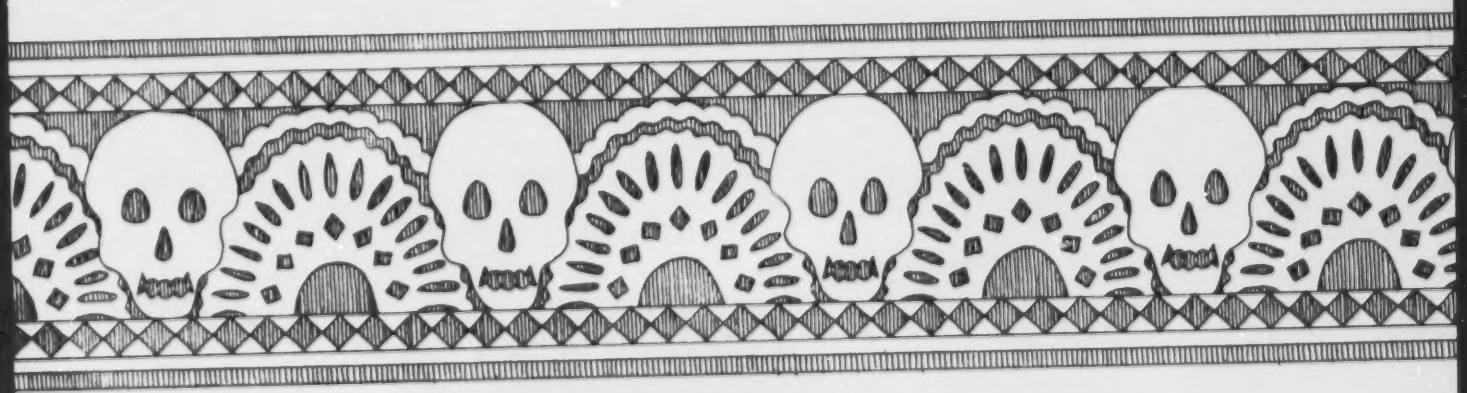
waxed crayons; and/or

tempera paint;

scissors;

glue and/or tape;

surprises from *THE BOX*.



Quick Puppets Made from Paper Plates

Quick puppets made from paper plates folded in two with eyes, upper lips and hair on the upper half; the under side of the bottom half for a lower lip and Pancho Villa's whiskers, if they belong; and a cloth dress for your arm and hand to give it action.

Puppets Made from Boxes

Make *puppets from large or small boxes*, a pair to a puppet, again, the top box has the eyes to see with, the hair for allure and a kissing mouth or upper lip; the lower box for a lower lip and for a chin dimple, etc.; each opened at the back for busy hands or fingers to give them a good talking with. *"The better to say it with, my dear!"*. Be sure to staple the boxes together or fasten with brads in the back so they won't completely fall apart. You'll flip the parts up and down and "the play's the thing."

Paper Bag Puppets

Paper bag puppets have their faces made on the closed bag's bottom; the lower face goes right on the front of the bag below the bottom.

Masks for a Quick Change

Masks for a quick change made on a paper plate with a string or elastic to hold it on; made on a foil tray; on 2/3 of an oatmeal box, or a cornflake box, or a shoe box; made from a shaped paper base or from Papier Mache; and so on, and so on, and so on.

You must remember this: A puppet is not just a puppet; a mask is not just a mask. They can give the children that motivational spark; take away their uneasiness; as they are being someone else. Give a group a chance to work together; to plan, review and create a story or explore an idea about the Art of the Folk.

HINTS: While most youngsters can work together in small groups, from about the 4th grade up, and younger children usually have the best luck if they have more adult guidance, don't generalize: see what way works with your youngsters. The same philosophy and rationale go into map and mural making as masks and puppets.

Murals - Maps

Pick your group: Small groups; individuals; or the whole class as a large group. Certainly, among the criteria in an art-social studies approach, authenticity is paramount.

Through discussions, readings, examination of art pieces, listening and sharing with resources (people, films, etc.) concepts will start to come. Through the making of maps, murals, individual booklets, you will not have merely a chance to judge what kind of a test score the child deserves, but rather what you have learned to that point (or if you want to give a grade at all).

The study of anything is an ongoing process and even a teacher can't flunk.

The making of maps and murals will give you a real opportunity to check on misconceptions (if everyone participates) as language arts skills permit.

Individual Maps and Murals

Group or class murals, *resource maps or dramatizations* will help you determine together the material to be covered or covered i.e., dramatization (class written, using puppets or masks to make real, and to hide behind a bit), a big market day with people bringing in their craft pieces which can include work from other regions in this day of easy transport. It could be market days in various cities representing the states and regions of our particular interest.

Choose your way to go; *learning is in the mind of the participant!*

Murals, Big or Little

Determine the main idea, as setting up a market, etc.

What do you want to include?

What kind of verbalizations would be appropriate? *("We have come such a long way on our burro and the cobblestones have been very hard on his feet"* or in another region *"The dust has been so bad for his coat"* and *"Oh, I broke a whole basket of little pots so we must make twice as many next week.")*

Murals in one class could be:

Going to market

Setting up the wares and foods —

Selling, with a "gringo" bargaining —

or

The Tehuana culture:

The ladies dressing and the men resting or the ladies selling and the men sleeping.

Ways of grouping: Choose with whom you would like to work; teacher selects individuals in the group; group according to ability, as most able workers together.

That way all children will have a chance for true participation; murals for individualization.

Processes: Paper and collage (materials *de La Caja*); paints; crayons; chalk in sugar water and powdered milk for brightness.

A big cloth mural like a Mexican wall hanging with stitchery.

Acetate overlay murals.

Sketch the mural drawing in white chalk first;

decide what the main idea will be and whether to make one or several as mentioned above.

Several modes;

1. Each child sketch what he or she feels should have been included.
2. a chairman might be assigned to jot down content and who will execute each portion;
3. try to have pre-drawing sketches;
4. make a valiant attempt to get the perpetual sky and cloud maker into a more creative slot.

Maps:

Craft production maps (do the basic outline on Manila paper, construction paper or butcher paper).

Decide the road to take: State or regional maps separately made or that fit together or work together, or make a big map together.

The crafts can be crayoned, painted or chalked onto the map, or cut from paper and "goodies" sculptured and placed onto the map.

See our map, but work your way.

Acetate overlay maps can tell about a lot of things at once: Crafts; industry; foods; and factories (a subject to a sheet). Put them all together and *you have MEXICO!*

Short Cuts

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

To make tempera and colored chalk really bright: Mix 1 tsp. sugar to 1 cup liquid (Please don't eat the sugar!)

ANTIQUING

Antiquing with a "quick picker upper":

Strong instant coffee; a brush, a rag or paper towel.

Brush over flat surface before or after painting and let it fill all of the nooks and crannies.

BREAKFAST SALAD

Use as a substitute for plastic spray where a shiny finish is needed.

Brush a beaten egg or a bit of mayonnaise over flat-textured pieces to make them shine.

CLASSROOM LACQUER FINISHES

1. Crayon etching (Two-tone lacquer)

   Crayon the bottom of a box, paper plate, dried Baker's Clay or Mache, with a strong color of crayon; go over this with India ink or a contrasting color of crayon. With simple etching tools, such as table knives or spoons, nail heads or points, scratch through the design you want and it will show the color underneath.

2. Crayon resist (Multi-colored lacquer)

   Crayon a multi-colored pattern on a box, paper plate, dried Baker's Clay or Máché, as shown in Lacquer from Michoacán, on the bare but gessoed-ready piece.

   Be sure that there is not one speck of space left in the crayoned areas.

   Cover the surface with thin tempera (2 parts water for 1 part dry tempera).

   You can use water color paints and easel brushes (for a clean sweep).

HOMEMADE GESSO

Commercial gesso is a white thick substance used to prepare many kinds of surfaces (boxes, gourds, canvas, etc.) for decoration.

It is costly and has a good substitute: Mix 1 part dry tempera to 1 part canned milk or mixed powdered milk.

NO MORE SHINE

To prepare a naturally slick or shiny surface for painting, mix 1 tbsp. of kitchen cleanser (or more) with ½ cup of water.

Brush over a shiny surface such as aluminum foil or glass.

Surface is now ready to be painted with tempera, crayons, or gesso, etc.

For brighter add 1 tbsp. sugar.

MILKY TEMPERA

To make paint or chalk that won't come off, add 1 tbsp. powdered milk to 1 cup of liquid.

SWEET CHALK

1 tsp. sugar to ½ cup of water; dip colored chalk in for a brighter "day."

MILKY SWEET CHALK

Mix powdered or canned milk with the sweet chalk.

ICKY STICKY

When working with clay, Baker's Clay, Migajón, Papier Mâché, if you tape wax paper to the working surface, it will help separate table and artifacts; and old shirts put on backward on the children *will help separate them from their work!*

Mexican Cooking in the Classroom

A little background: Mexican cooking is an art, and it is practiced by the Folk.

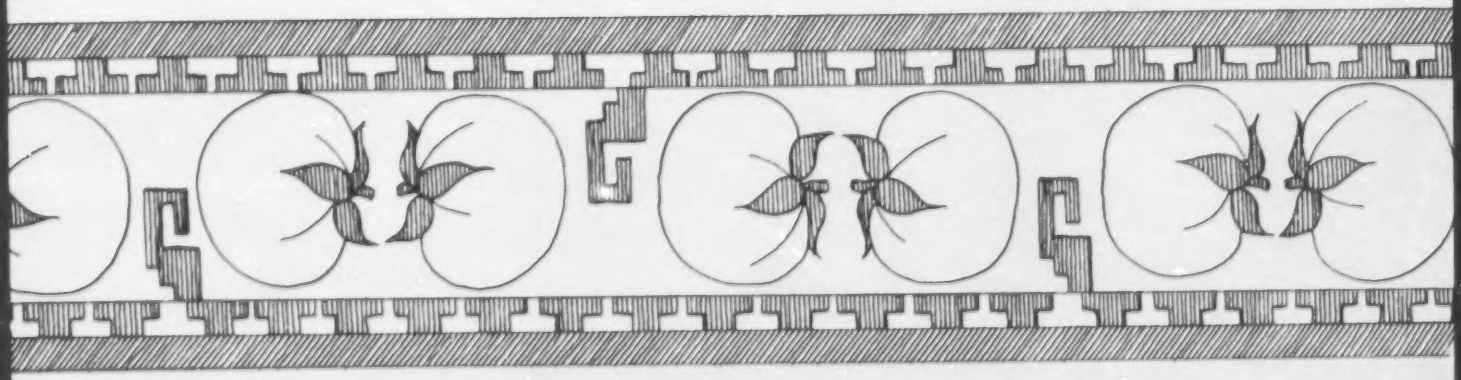
It is said that there are 2,000 recipes in Mexico, but there are enough common threads to fly over the mountains and jump over the rivers and share some recipes that are universal.

In any Mexican market the Art of the Folk is apparent. Piles of fresh fruits and vegetables are always beautifully displayed before each vendor.

In most markets there are little food stands. Mexican ingenuity is evident in the preparation of the food sold. Flavors, textures and colors are all considered with delicious, delightful results.

While there are some regional differences, these are miniscule. The basics are there and individual changes are made because of personal creativity.

Mexican cooking is an art, and is it popular!



Implements for Cooking in the Classroom

As many as possible, but if you have only one pot, keep cooking!

Crock pot: Used for beans, rice or *pasta* soup.

Skillet: *Tortillas, tacos, tostados,* etc.

If possible, have one or more electric frying pans; one or more electric griddles; one or more crock pots or other electric pots; or THE WHOLE CAFETERIA.

Scales, if you have one available.

Mexican dishes or pots or paper plates; or classroom originals made with paper plates dressed in paint or crayons and sealed in canned milk gesso.

Tortilla holder: Fold a 2 lb. coffee can lid in two; use as a *tortilla* folder when frying *tortilla* in hot grease (frying all doubled up).

Mexican Implements or Their U.S. Equivalents

Wooden bean masher (potato masher); knives and boards for cutting (a blender or food processor); or lovely carved wooden chocolate mixer (a slotted spoon); cast-iron griddle for making tortillas (electric frying pans and griddles Mexican lime squeezer (an orange squeezer, a blender or food processor); wooden spoons of all sizes and shapes (big spoons of all sizes and shapes); *metate* and its grinding stone, *la mano* (the *metate* has 3 legs and is made out of rough volcanic rock and is sloping in form); (a knife and a cutting surface of some sort; a blender or food processor) for grinding corn, *chiles* and all of the ingredients for making sauces. This is really a volcanic rock (and goes back in time 3500 years) mortar and pestle for grinding *chiles* and other spicy things for sauces. Children can make *metates* from the Mayan Sculpture recipe.

Tortilla press (or busy hands with a little ball of *Masa con Aqua* — these little balls are patted with hands always at right angles to each other, patting away and changing positions after every pat).

This cookbook could take up to 500 pages, many do: Mexican recipes are just plain *"yummy."*

Remember, you can do Mexican cooking with only one frying pan, minimum cooking ingredients and 25 to 30 pairs of hands.

You don't need the frying pan to grow herbs, or to have a salad.

With the help of friends, family and good common sense you can make these recipes work for you.

The recipes are not like soufflés, where the omission of an ingredient causes a disaster. Simply omit those ingredients and procedures which make the dish a problem to you. In fact, simplify constantly to suit your needs.

Don't hesitate to substitute *chiles* — but remember, *the seeds and veins are the hot parts!*

Some Ingredients

Beans – *Frijoles.* Use small red, or pink rather than pinto or kidney beans.

Cheese – *Queso.* Use Jack for quick melting, on *enchiladas* or in casseroles.
Use yellow Cheddar or Tillamook in beans, *empanadas* or *Chile con Queso.*

Sausage – *Chorizo.* Mexican style sausage. *Longaniza* is similar and perhaps better, if available. Take from casing and fry slowly until very dry. Used in many dishes instead of meat or fowl.

Chinese Parsley – *Cilantro.* It is the green plant that later bears coriander seeds. It is used extensively in soups, salads, and sauces.

Dough – *Masa.* This word means dough, usually referring to the ground corn dough used in making *tortillas* and *tamales.* You can buy *"masa harina"* in most stores. This means the flour for making the *masa* for making *tortillas,* etc.

Oil – *Aceite.* Use any vegetable oil for frying. It can be used again, again, and again.

Rice – *Arroz.* Use long grain. It cooks quicker and drier or fluffier.

Shortening – In Mexico they use lard *(manteca)* exclusively. It makes very light pastry, and in cooking it will fry at a high temperature without burning. Vegetable shortenings may be substituted.

Pastas – All sizes and shapes.

Spices and Herbs. Most used are cumin, cinnamon, oregano, anise and mint.

Pilonciilo. This is a brown sugar sold in cone-shaped loaves that vary in size. To substitute in recipes use dark brown sugar and a little molasses.

Tomatillos – Green, husk tomatoes used in *Salsa Verde.* The *tomatillo* is of the solanaceous family, not like the tomato, and it is always green and covered by a husk. To prepare, remove husks and boil *tomatillos* in salted water until just tender, about 10 minutes. Puree with chiles and garlic.

Tortillas – In these recipes when we say *"tortilla"* we mean a corn *tortilla.* The flour *tortillas* are good to eat and are used in *burritos,* etc., but for *enchiladas,* the corn *tortilla* is used.

Epazote – A strong smelling herb used in black beans and many other dishes. It grows wild in California, called Pigweed, Wormseed, Mexican Tea.

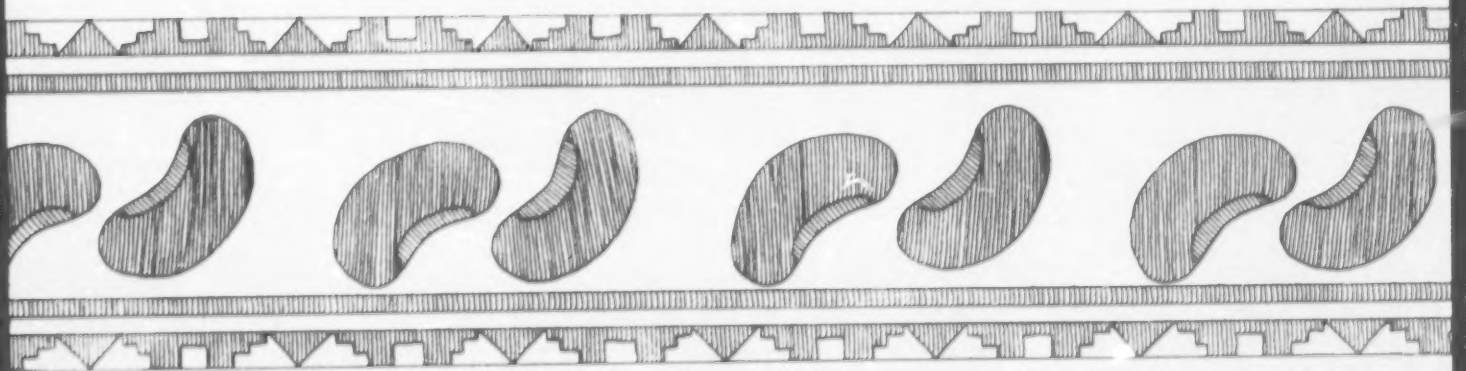
Chiles

There are over 100 varieties of *chiles.* These are the *chiles* that we find here:

FRESH CHILES

California or Anaheim – long green *chiles* used for *chiles rellenos.* They must be peeled.

Pasilla – found in Mexican stores. This *chile* is used like the California *chile,* but is short



and fat and more like the *chile Poblano;* use for mild sauces.

Jalapeño – small hot *chile* used without peeling in sauces. Remove veins and seeds to make less hot. You can eat it as a hot relish.

Serrano – smaller, thinner, hotter than the *jalapeno.* Used interchangeably with *jalapeño.*

Wax Green – used interchangeably with *jalapeno* or *serrano.* Milder, light colored.

Fresno Dark Green – use like *jalapeño.*

DRIED CHILES

Dried California *Chile* – sometimes called *chile Ancho.* Used in red sauces. Must be soaked and pureed.

Dried New Mexico *Chile* – much more piquant than California Chile.

Dried *Mulato* – used with *pasilla* and California in sauces. Gives dark color.

Chiles Japones – small, very hot. Ground up and added to sauces or sprinkled on food.

Chile Pequin or Tepin – small, round *chile.* Use like *japones.*

CANNED CHILES

The California, the *jalapeño* and the *serrano* are regularly found canned, either *"entero"*, whole, or *"rajas"*, strips.

Chipotle – small very hot peppers put up in a barbecue sauce.

You can freeze *chiles* so buy a "a bunch" and pop into a plastic bag for a *"hot day."*

Grow Your Own Herbs and Vegetables

Depending upon your school facilities, you can grow your own herbs and some basics, but do check with a local nurseryman for instructions on growing herbs in pots or in the ground, such as cilantro, oregano and mint and vegetables, such as peppers, garlic, onions, *tomatillos* (available mostly in the southwest and looks like a green tomato, but it isn't – it's so spicy and good!), tomatoes, lettuce and zucchini.

Your nurseryman may have other ideas for you.

Que Bien? Be sure to get planting, feeding and watering instructions.

The Mexican dinner almost always starts with a wet or dry soup. These are virtually the same and include either *pasta* or rice, the difference between these two is in the amount of water. (Chicken or beef broth base with rice or pasta and lots of vegetables.)

Ask each child who can to bring something to add to the soup pot, e.g., ½ cup rice or 1 carrot.

Recipes

Corn or Flour Tortillas

A *tortilla* press;

plastic wrap (to keep *tortillas* from sticking to the press when flattened or the able hands of children patting back and forth with hand whacking down on the little ball in the palm, coming at right angles to each other);

2 cups *masa harina* or *harina de trigo* (wheat);

1-1/3 cups warm water;

an electric frying pan;

an electric griddle (if possible)

Mix flour and water into a dough and a soft ball.

Flatten the *tortilla* (hands or press) and place it in the cooler of the frying pans (or in the one that will be turned up).

Flip it and after a few seconds, place it into the hotter pan and let it cook until it develops dark brown speckles (it's like a medical diagnosis, *oh dear!*); then flip it onto the other side.

Total cooking time: 2 minutes.

Place at once into a cloth-lined basket, put a cloth over them and some foil over that if you like.

The *tortilla* experience is very exciting, very Mexican and very time-consuming when there are 30 or more pairs of hands and mouths waiting, so next time buy your corn *(masa)* or *trigo* (wheat) *tortillas* at a factory or your nearest supermarket.

Tortillas de Trigo: ¼ lb. lard or ½ vegetable shortening;

2 tsp. salt;

1 cup warm water;

Knead it for 3 minutes, set it aside for 3 hours before cooking.

IMPORTANT! The ever delicious *tortilla* now:

An *Enchilada*, fried in oil and all rolled up with filling and sauce;

a *Taco*, fried and folded, filled and sauced;

a *Tostada*, fried, flat, covered and sauced; and

a *Quedadilla*, a little cheese, a little heat, and a little *Tortilla*.

Vegetable Salads

All sorts of vegetables find their way into Mexican salad bowls, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, garlic, lettuce, onions, and cooked vegetables that have been soaking (marinating) in lime or lemon juice or vinegar. These include carrots, squash, corn, beans, broccoli.

Use a vinegar and oil dressing.

Perk it up a bit with *chile*,

Toss and serve.

Salsa Colorada - Made with Dried Chiles

8 oz. dried *chiles*, about 18 pods. Use *Pasilla* or New Mexico for spicier sauce. Dried California *chiles* are mild. Combine *chiles* for flavor, using some *Guajillo*, if available;

1 or 2 cloves of garlic;

2 tbsp. shortening;

1 cup tomato sauce;

3 cups water (sometimes less, depending on *chiles*);

1 tsp. salt;

1 tsp. sugar;

1 tsp. ground cinnamon;

1 tsp. cumin;

1 tsp. oregano;

Remove stems, seeds and orange vein from dried *chiles*.

Put in boiling water to cover.

Boil 15 minutes or so, then leave soaking in hot water.

The longer the *chiles* soak, the softer they will be and the easier to grind.
A crock pot could be used for this in the classroom or the *chiles* could be boiled at home and brought to school.

Toasting the *chiles* before soaking improves the flavor.

Drain the *chiles* and grind with garlic in blender or with a knife.

Strain if there seem to be pieces of dried skin still in pureed mixture.

Melt shortening.

Add pureed *chiles*.

Cook a second or two, add tomato sauce, cook a minute, then add enough water to make right consistency: Not too thick or too thin.

Add spices.

Simmer about 10 minutes.

USE THOSE INGREDIENTS YOU HAVE, BUT *DON'T LEAVE OUT THE CHILE!*

Salsa Verde - Green Sauce Made from Tomatillos

4 lbs. *tomatillos* or 6 12 oz. cans;

2 or 3 small green *chiles*, *jalapeños*, *serranos*, or wax green, etc., fresh or canned;

2 or 3 cloves garlic

cilantro (optional)

2 tbsp. shortening

1 cup water, approximately

1 tsp. salt or to taste

Remove husks from *tomatillos*.

This is more easily done when *tomatillos* are wet.

Boil these until tender enough to pierce with a fork, about 10 minutes.

Drain off all water.

(If using canned *tomatillo*, drain)

Remove stems, seeds and veins from *chiles*.

Put *chiles*, garlic and *tomatillos* in blender, or chop into small pieces with knife and mash with a fork.

Then put through sieve to remove *tomatillo* seeds and skin.

Heat shortening.

Add *tomatillo* puree.

Cook a few minutes.

Add water and salt.

Simmer about 10 minutes.

Sauce used with chicken, pork, fish, etc.

Salsa Picante - A Cold Hot Sauce

2 tomatoes, unpeeled;

½ onion;

3 *"chilitos"* (*jalapeño* or *serrano*), fresh or a small can;

lemon juice – 1 squeeze;

1 tbsp. olive oil;

salt and pepper to taste;

1 tbsp. chopped *cilantro* (if possible).

Take stem ends off of *chiles*.

If using fresh *jalapeños*, remove some of the white seeds and veins at stem end.

The more seeds and veins left in, the more piquant the sauce.

Be sure to wash your hands in cold water immediately after handling *chiles*.

Chop all the ingredients.

Chop the *chiles* quite fine, the tomatoes and onions in small pieces.

Scrape them into a bowl.

Add lemon juice, oil, salt and pepper.

Chill.

Before serving top with chopped *cilantro.* (optional)

This sauce keeps in a jar in the refrigerator for about a week.

Serve a bowl of it with all Mexican food, or as a dip with *tostaditas.*

Sopa de Fideos - Soup Made of Pasta

8 oz. *fideos* or other fine spaghetti;

2 tbsp. oil;

2 tbsp. butter or margarine;

½ cup finely chopped onion;

1 cup tomato sauce;

5 cups chicken broth;

Heat oil with butter or margarine.

Fry *fideos,* stirring, until brown.

Watch carefully because it burns very easily.

Drain and pat dry on paper towel.

In some oil cook onion until slightly soft.

Add tomato sauce and chicken broth.

Bring to boil and simmer about 10 minutes.

Add the *fideos* and simmer a few minutes.

Serve in soup bowls with dollop of sour cream.

If this soup stands, or when you reheat, the spaghetti will have absorbed most of the soup and you will have a "dry soup."

Calabacitos con Elote - Zucchini and Corn

2 lbs. zucchini;

1 lb. corn kernels, fresh, frozen or canned (1½ cups);

3 peeled California *chiles* in strips;

2 onions cut in rings;

2 cups solid pack tomatoes, or equivalent in fresh, peeled;

2 tbsp. oil;

Salt and pepper.

Parboil the zucchini.

Dice or cut in rounds.

Heat oil.

Saute onions.

Add other ingredients and cook about 15 minutes.

Salt and pepper to taste.

Frijoles Refritos - Refried Beans

1½ cups small red beans or pink beans;

3 cups water;

1 ham hock or strip bacon (optional);

1 whole onion;

1 tsp. salt;

3 tbsp. shortening;

1 cup grated Jack or Cheddar cheese.

If possible, soak the beans 8 or more hours.

Do not change the water, but add more as necessary while cooking.

Put in the ham hock (optional) and the onion.

Wrap the onion in cheese cloth if possible.

Cook beans 1½ to 2 hours.

Add salt after the first hour.

If in hurry, the beans can be started in boiling water, turn off heat and soak for 2 hours, then start cooking as above.

Remove onion and (ham hock).

Serve as is or:

Melt shortening.

Add the beans.

Mash with potato masher or wooden spoon.

Keep adding bean juice while you mash.

Let beans simmer as you mash.

The more liquid the beans absorb, the richer they will taste.

Just before serving, taste for salt, then add the cheese and stir until melted.

To reheat beans, start with some lard and add water if no bean juice is left.

Add more cheese if desired.

Tamales

ABOUT 2 DOZEN

Husks *(ojas)* are sold by the pound.

For 2 dozen tamales, allow about 4 oz.

Soak them in very hot water for about 15 minutes or until pliable.

Separate the husks.

Remove any silk.

Wrap in towel to dry.

Foil may be used instead of husks.

It is easier to handle the tamales if they are wrapped in cooking parchment paper even though they are in husks.

MASA (the dough)

3 cups *Masa Harina* (prepared flour for making tortillas, etc.);

1 cup shortening;

2 cups chicken or pork broth, tepid;

1 tsp. salt.

Cream the shortening.

Add part of the *Masa Harina* and salt.

Cream.

Add liquid then rest of *Masa Harina.*

Beat until very fluffy.

When sufficiently beaten a small ball of the dough will float in water.

MAKING THE TAMALES

Choose largest of the husks, or put two together, cementing them with a little of the dough.

Be sure husk isn't too wet or the *masa* will not stick.

Spread a thick layer of *masa* on the wide end.

Leave the pointed end empty.

Put a generous spoonful of the red or green sauce on the *masa* and spread it.

Put pieces of chicken, pork or beef or cheese (shredded) in center.

Bring the two sides over, loosely.

Turn up the pointed end.

Tie with strip of husk or wrap in parchment paper, twisting the bottom end.

Keep as nearly upright as possible.

COOKING THE TAMALES

The *tamales* must steam about 1½ to 2 hours in a kettle with a tight-fitting lid.

The kettle must be deep enough to hold about 2" of water below the rack on which *tamales* are placed.

The *tamales* should be standing upright and the water must not touch them, but they must be arranged loosely so that the steam circulates around them.

Put hot water in the kettle.

Place the rack so the water is below it.

Arrange the *tamales* standing up on the folded over end, or twisted end if parchment paper is used.

Put a cloth over the top of the kettle, the lid on top of the cloth.

Keep the water boiling gently.

A dime in the bottom of the kettle will rattle.

If it stops rattling either the water is not boiling or it has boiled dry!

Add water!

At the end of 1½ hours, take out a *tamale* and unroll.

If it is cooked the dough will come away from the husk and look and taste cooked.

When serving the *tamale*, take off paper if paper is used, unroll husk and fold back under *tamale*.

It is well to have some extra sauce hot to pour over *tamale*.

Tamale Fillings

12 TAMALES

Chicken *Tamales*

3 cups cooked chicken shredded very coarsely

3 cups *Salsa Colorada*, preferably the one made with dried *chiles*, and cut the liquid down to 1 cup tomato sauce and 1½ cups water. Also add more cumin. If use the *Salsa Colorada* made with chile powder, thicken it with flour.

Pork *Tamales*

3 cups cooked pork in fairly large pieces.

3 or 4 cups *Salsa Verde* made a little thicker by using little or no extra water.

Beef *Tamales*

3 cups shredded cooked beef.

3 to 4 cups *Salsa Verde* or *Salsa Colorada*.

In all of these *tamales*, spread sauce over dough, then put in pieces of meat or fowl, then add more sauce.

And when it comes to serving, open up the *tamales*, but leave sitting on husk.

Add more sauce, kept aside for this purpose, and heated.

Variations: Instead of adding more *Salsa Colorada* when serving, it is nice to top with Chili Beans.

Cook beans as usual, rinse, then mix with *Salsa Colorada*, extra onions and cooked hamburger if desired.

Add peanuts or almonds and/or raisins to the basic meat or chicken *tamale* recipes for a change of texture and taste.

Tamales para Postre - Dessert Tamales

1½ cups *masa harina;*

½ cup shortening;

1 cup warm water;

½ cup cream;

½ tsp. salt;

¼ cup sugar or brown sugar;

2 tsp. cinnamon;

¼ cup chopped peanuts;

1 tsp. vanilla;

¼ cup raisins, plumped in hot water.

Cream shortening and *masa harina.*

Add water and cream.

Beat until very fluffy.

Stir in nuts, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and raisins.

Add salt and more sugar to taste.

Spread on prepared husks and cook as for all *tamales.*

Remember, fold them up with their tails tucked up and tie with a corn husk strip *just like a present!*

Little ones are fun to make and good to eat!

Chiles Relleños - Stuffed Chile Peppers

6 California *chiles,* fresh or canned, or fresh *pasilla chiles:*

5-6 eggs, separated;

2 tbsp. flour;

flour for dredging;

vegetable oil for frying and for peeling fresh *chiles* (2 in 12" frying pan);

filling *(relleño)* either fingers of Jack or Cheddar;

cheese or *Picadillo* meat filling;

3 cups *Ranchera, Verde, Entomatada* or *Colorada* sauce.

If using canned *chiles,* just remove seeds and veins.

Fresh *chiles* must be peeled.

To peel, heat the oil very hot.

Drop in the *chiles.*

When brown and blistered on one side, turn to brown and blister the other side.

Remove from oil and wrap in damp cloth.

When cool enough to handle, peel off skin, leaving stem.

Slit open and remove seeds and veins.

Use scissors to snip veins so as to keep *chile* as whole as possible.

Prepare batter.

Beat egg whites very stiff..

Beat yolks with flour until thick.

Fold whites into yolks.

Fill each *chile* and dredge in flour.

Dip in batter, fry in hot oil, drain.

To cover with batter there are several ways;

1. Hold chile with split side up in both hands, scoop up batter, drop *chile* in pan, with spoon add more batter to cover;
2. With spoon drop dollop of batter in hot oil, lay the *chile* on top, add batter to cover.

Tacos Mexicanos - Mexican Style Tacos

12 corn *tortillas;*

oil for frying (1" in pan);

2 tbsp. oil;

3 cups cooked, shredded meat or poultry. Have shreds no more than 1" long. (Beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey or cheese may be used. Brisket of Beef is particularly good.);

½ cup chopped onion;

Salt and pepper to taste;

3 cups *Guacamole* or *Campechana* Sauce.

Heat oil in frying pan.

Dip each *tortilla* in hot oil to soften.

Drain.

Keep warm.

To prepare filling, heat 2 tbsp. oil and saute onions a few minutes, until soft.

Add shredded meat, salt and pepper and cook until meat is heated through.

Put about 2 tbsp. filling in each *tortilla* and roll up fairly tightly.

In the hot oil in which *tortillas* were softened, fry the tacos.

Using tongs, put each *taco* in hot oil, seam side down.

Or fasten *tacos* with tooth picks and fry seam side up first, then remove tooth pick to brown other side.

Do not fry the *tacos* too crisp.

Drain well.

When ready to serve, open the *taco* slightly and put in some of the sauce.

SUPERVISE CLOSELY!

Enchilada Sonorense - Sonora Style Cheese Enchilada

1 cup grated yellow, Cheddar or Tillamook cheese;

1 cup chopped green olives;

1 cup chopped green onions.

Mix all ingredients for filling.

Fill, roll, top with red sauce and grated cheese.

Heat in oven to melt cheese.

Enchilada Suiza - Swiss Style Enchilada

SO- CALLED BECAUSE OF THE SOUR CREAM

3 cups cooked chicken, shredded;

2 tbsp. liquid;

½ cup chopped onion;

salt and pepper;

1 cup sour cream, slightly thinned with milk.

Heat chicken in broth or water.

Add onion, salt and pepper.

Make as for all *enchiladas*, but add the sour cream just before serving.

Serve with green sauce.

Guacamole Sauce

CHOPPED STYLE

2 large avocadoes;

½ onion;

1 or 2 cloves garlic;

1 tomato, peeled;

2 or 3 small green *chiles*, cleaned;

1 tbsp. oil;

1 or 2 tsp. lemon juice;

salt and pepper to taste;

Cilantro.

Chop avocadoes, onion, garlic, tomato and *chiles* together.

Add oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Add *cilantro* at last.

Keep the avocado seed in the dish so that the sauce won't turn brown.

Arroz Verde - Green Rice

3 tbsp. oil;

1½ cups long grain rice;

6-8 peeled California *chiles;*

3 tbsp. parsley;

3 cloves garlic;

3 cups water;

salt and pepper.

Heat the oil.

Add the rice and cook, stirring until oil is absorbed and rice has become translucent.

Blend *chiles,* parsley and garlic.

Add to rice.

Cook a few seconds, then add water and bring to boil.

Lower heat, cover tightly with cloth over cover, and simmer 20 minutes.

Salt and pepper to taste.

Stir, with fork.

If rice not fluffy, cook a few minutes more.

While still hot, arrange in a greased ring mold and keep warm.

Salsa Ranchera - Ranch Style Sauce

1 tbsp. oil;

3 bell peppers, seeds removed, sliced;

3 medium onions, sliced;

1 28 oz. can solid pack tomatoes, sliced or fresh tomatoes, peeled and sliced;

3 canned California peeled *chiles,* sliced *(rajas)* in strips;

2 cups chicken broth;

2 sticks cinnamon;

salt and pepper to taste.

Heat the oil.

Saute the bell peppers a few minutes.

Add onions and saute 2-3 minutes.

Add tomato, *chile* strips, broth, cinnamon sticks, salt and pepper.

Simmer about 15 minutes.

This sauce is good for fish or chicken.

It is used in *Enchiladas Rancheras* and *Huevos Rancheros.*

It is also used with *Chiles Rellenos.*

Buñuelos - Traditional Mexican Dessert

Makes about 3 dozen.

2 cups flour;

¼ cup sugar;

1 tsp. baking powder;

1 egg,

1/3 cup milk;

2 tbsp. melted butter

Sift dry ingredients together.

Beat egg and milk together.

Add to dry ingredients.

Add melted butter.

Mix well.

Turn out on floured board and knead a few times.

Wrap and chill if possible.

Pinch off pieces about the size of a walnut.

Roll into smooth balls.

Roll out very thin, PAPER THIN.

Each one should be about 5" or 6" round.

It is best to roll out all the *bunuelos*, stacking with paper between before you begin to fry them.

Have oil very hot.

Drop *bunuelo* in, turn, then turn again if not brown.

Drain well on absorbent paper.

While still hot, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

Traditionally they are served broken into bowls with *Piloncillo* syrup, and eaten with the fingers.

Atole-
A Favorite Mexican Drink

This drink starts with a ground rice or corn base. Make it sweet with raw sugar and add fruits and juices that please you and the season.

Serve nice and cold.

More Help Is on the Way

1. Often parents and/or community members will be a big help in sharing experiences, craft pieces, recipes, to say nothing of themselves.

2. Mexicana, Aero Mexico and Western Airlines all fly to Mexico and in Mexico, so contact them and local travel offices for posters, maps, and what other helpers they have at hand.

3. Walking field trips to Mexican stores of all kinds; supermercados will be a big help.

4. If you take a trip, plan with the children what to look for.

5. There is hardly a book on Mexico that doesn't have at least one artifact in the content (illustration) and can be shown through opaque or overhead projectors.

6. Be sure to check your Instructional Media Center for films, film strips, slides, and other resources they may have.

7. Remember that the ultimate goal here is to help build for boys and girls understandings of Mexico, Mexicans and of other cultures generally.

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Booklets

"Mexican Native Arts and Crafts"

"Mexican Native Dance"

"Mexican Native Costumes"

Drawing by Luis Covarrubias. He was a foremost art practitioner, historian, and folklorist. These are lovely little books.

Order through: *The Museum of Anthropology*
Chapultepec Park
Mexico, D.F. Mexico

There are loads of fine educational films, film strips and records in most A.V. or Media Centers. You'll get most help by focusing on:

(1) craft processes used in this book,
(2) Mexican life and folk arts and
(3) records to play for authenticity.

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